



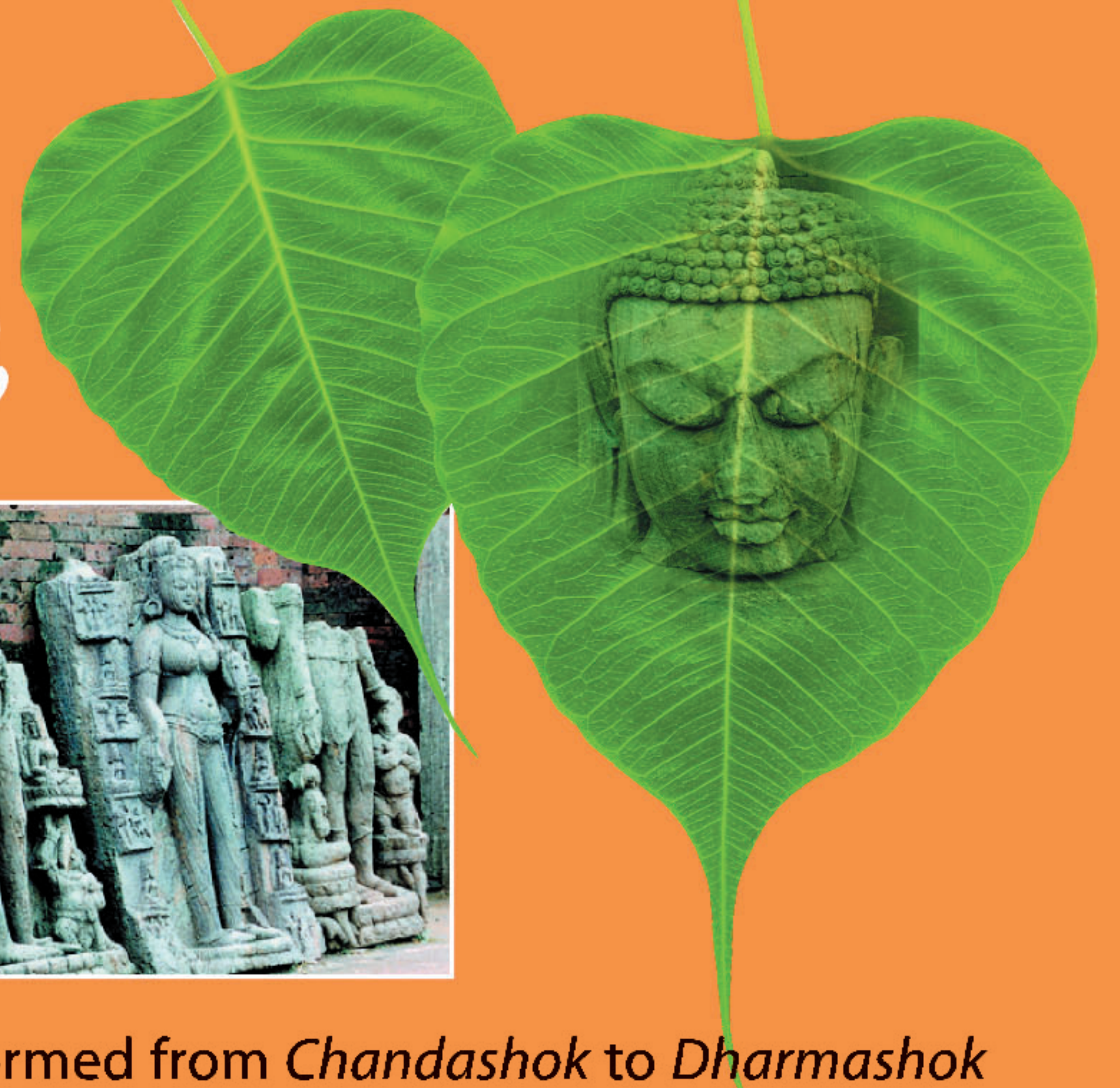
November 2001 - Rs. 10/-

CHANDAMAMA

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL

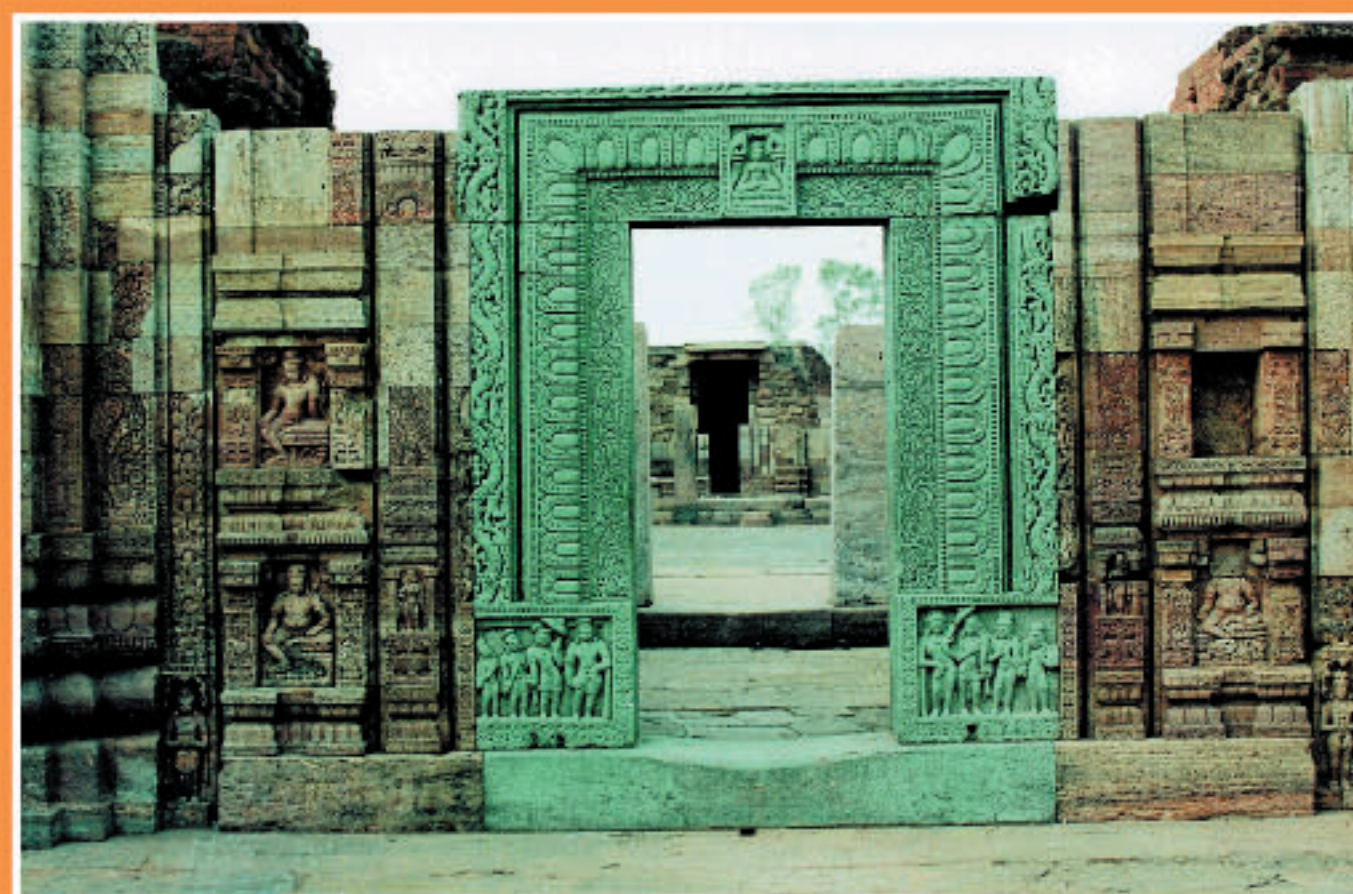


Remnants of Buddhist Heritage



The Mauryan Emperor Ashok was transformed from *Chandashok* to *Dharmashok* after seeing the bloodshed during the Kalinga War, fought on the banks of river Daya near Bhubaneswar, way back in 3rd century BC. His consequent conversion to Buddhism was responsible for the spread of this religion, not only in Orissa but also to other parts of the country, as well as countries like China, Japan and Sri Lanka. The rock edicts at Dhauili, about 8 kms from Bhubaneswar, are a mute testimony of this change of heart. As a commemoration, a Peace Pagoda has been built here through the Indo-Japanese collaboration.

Besides, some of the most wonderful relics of that era have come to light in the recent excavations, about 70 kms away from Cuttack, by the hillsides of Udayagiri, Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and their environs like Langudi hill and Kayama hill. The hills were home to a large Buddhist complex, which could be the ruins of a Buddhist University called Pushpagiri, mentioned in the travelogues of the Chinese traveller Huiyen T' sang.



Orissa
The Soul of India

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This being a special issue, some of our regular features have been held over for December.



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Founded by
B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

A special issue for smiling faces

When we think of November, we immediately think of Children's Day. We have been celebrating Children's Day on November 14 since the late 1950s to mark the birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister.

But even before we started observing Children's Day, the General Assembly of the United Nations had recommended that all nations institute a Universal Children's Day to promote children's welfare activities. This was in 1954. On November 20, 1959, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It was the UNICEF that declared November 20, the date when that resolution was passed, as the Universal Children's Day.

And the month of November has come to be associated with the smiling faces of children.

The other thing that one associates with November is that wonderful festival that we love: Diwali, which brings light into all our lives. We have reason to hope that Diwali will bring light into the lives of many more children this year than ever before. This is because a firecrackers manufacturers' association has recently declared that young children are no longer being employed in the potentially dangerous fireworks industry. This is good news indeed for all those who champion for children's rights.

Chandamama has always been bringing light and delight into the lives of our young readers. Recently, November has come to have very special connotations for the magazine, too. For the last two years, we have been publishing an exclusive Children's Special issue in November, which carries stories and drawings from children.

At Chandamama, we believe that children have a right not only to food, clothes, shelter, love and education for their healthy growth; they also have a right to a healthy and challenging outlet for their creative energies. Chandamama's Children's Special issue for November hopes to meet this need by providing children with a platform to showcase their talents.



Editor : VISWAM Editorial Advisors : RUSKIN BOND, MANOJ DAS
Consultant Editor : K. RAMAKRISHNAN

Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

Heroes of India-2

You love sports, don't you?
Here is a quiz on your favourite sports heroes of India.

*Three
all correct entries
will receive bicycles
as awards.**

1 He led the Indian hockey team to an Olympic gold in the Los Angeles Olympics in 1932. He is believed to have scored more than a thousand goals in international matches between 1926 and 1948.
Who was he?

2 He was once the Junior Wimbledon champ, and today he is one of India's winsome tennis pair!
Who's he?

3 Who is the little master who was the first batsman to score more than 10,000 runs?

4 He is the world champ in chess. Every Indian knows him. Surely you do, too!
.....

5 He put India on the world badminton map by winning the All England Badminton Championship in 1980. He was the national badminton champion for nine consecutive years. Know him?
.....

Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which of these five is your favourite sports hero and why? Write 10 words on
My favourite hero from sports is

.....
.....
.....
.....

Name of participant:
.....Age:Class:.....
Address:
.....
Pin: Ph:.....
Signature of participant:
Signature of parent:

Please tear off the page and mail it to
Heroes of India Quiz-2
CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED
No. 82, Defence Officers Colony
Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.
On/before December 5, 2001.

Instructions

- 1 The contest is open to children in the age group 8 - 14 years
- 2 *Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size. If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of My favourite hero.
- 3 The judges' decision will be final.
- 4 No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
- 5 The winners will be intimated by post.

*Prizes brought
to you by*



The Spook and the Musician

*I*f you want to take a look at the old, rundown well deep inside the cemetery that served Sonapur, you would have to trudge through the thorny and heavily weeded woods bordering the village. Nobody uses that well now: it is known to be the home of an old wise ghost. This old wise grandpa spook loved to give advice, and all the members of the spookworld consulted him on all matters. You could say that he was an honorary advisor to all weird beings.

Of course, not all spooks were happy with the kind of advice he dished out. The younger members of the community felt that he was rather outdated. “He’s out of touch with today’s world!” commented a spook punk, as it sadly shook its curly mane. He was talking to a cute she-spook who was facing a niggling problem on the home front. “Nevertheless,” she insisted, “I think I need ol’ grandpa’s advice in this matter.”

“Be yourself, think for yourself, and solve your own problems!” commented the punk spook, before slipping away into the darkness of the night.

The she-spook went to the old

well. “Grandpa! I need your help!” she burst out.

“What can I do for you, sweet little spook?” he asked, pleased at being approached by one of the young set.

“On the other side of the village,



at the centre of a grove, is a deserted house which I occupied last year. I lived there in peace till the other day. Then a musician from the town came

to live there. I have since known no peace at all. He and his students sing all day long and I simply can't stand it. How can I drive the musician away from the house?"

"That's easy," said the wise old spook, and he told her what to do. She glided away, satisfied.

Back home, she put the plan into action right away. That midnight, the musician woke up to a loud angry mew. He sat up and saw a huge cat standing right on his blanket. He was about to give it a blow when it changed into the spook that it was and said: "I'm the resident of this house. Will you please get out?"

"No!" replied the musician. "There's enough room for the two of us here. In fact, I'd suggest that you remain here in the guise of a cat as this would keep the rats out of this mansion!"

The she-spook was furious. "I'm not here to serve you!" she sniffed. "I'll change into an ugly lizard and frighten your students."

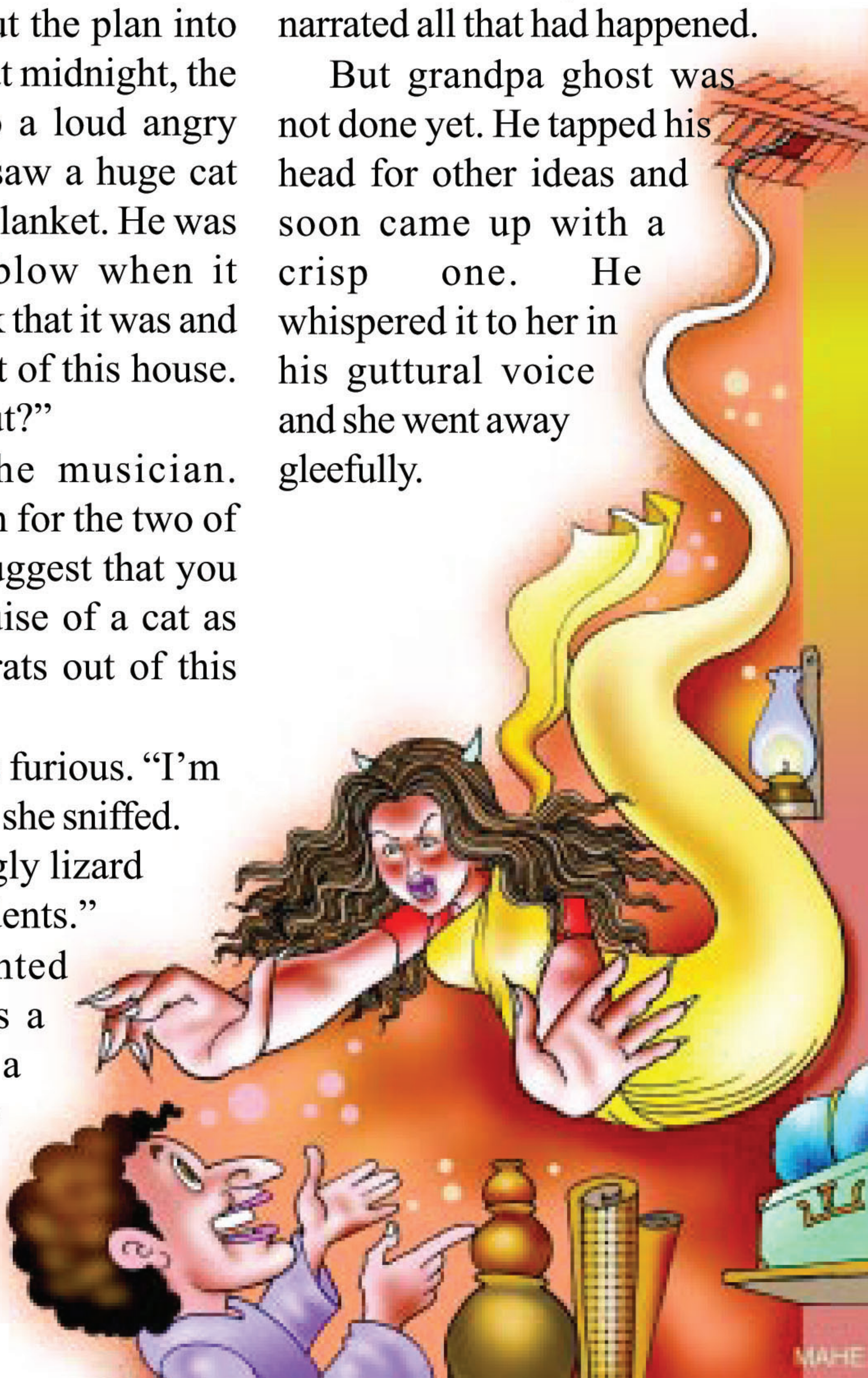
"Great!" commented the musician. "That's a very good idea. As a lizard, you can gobble up the insects and keep the house clean. Thanks, my dear spooky friend!"

The spook howled shrilly in utter disappointment and slid away. She went back to the old grandpa spook. "The musician is an incorrigible fellow!" she exclaimed.

"Why, what happened?" asked her honorary adviser.

"He wasn't frightened at all!" she narrated all that had happened.

But grandpa ghost was not done yet. He tapped his head for other ideas and soon came up with a crisp one. He whispered it to her in his guttural voice and she went away gleefully.



The next night, the musician woke up to a terrible clattering noise. He rushed out of the house and saw a tile from the roof, lying broken on the ground.

“Tee hee hee!” came a ghoulish shriek of laughter. He looked up and found his spooky friend of the previous night right on the roof.

“Hello!” he greeted her with a happy smile. “Thanks a lot. Just continue the good work! How did you guess that I wanted to remove and replace those boring old tiles?”

The spook’s grin vanished in a trice. She slunk away without a word and went back to grandpa. Grandpa’s ghostly face brightened when he saw her. “Ha, so you’ve brought me the good news!” said the short-sighted old ghost.

The she-spook wailed in sheer anguish. “You useless old fellow. How right my friend was! Your

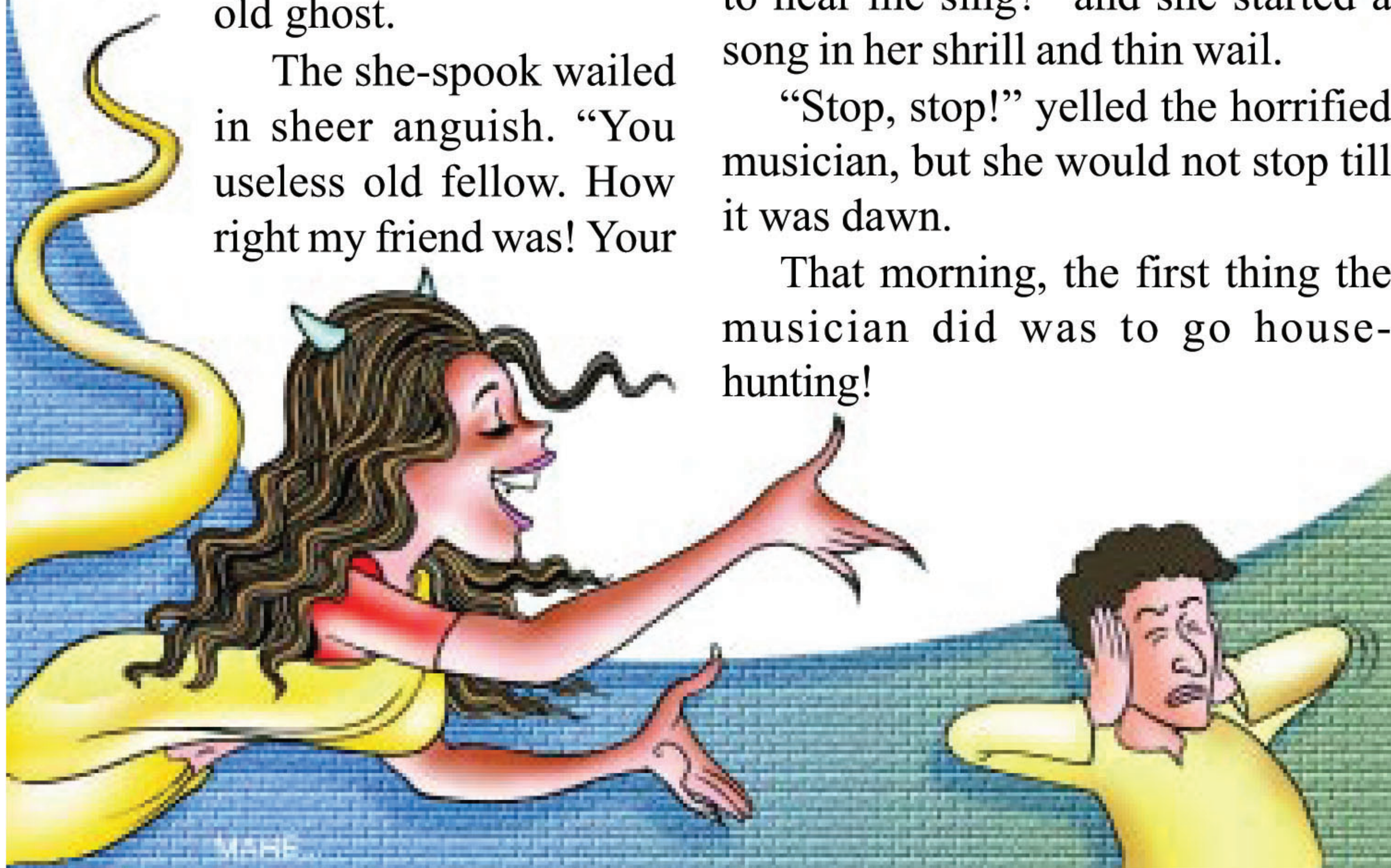
ideas are old-fashioned! Update yourself!” and she bounced off in anger.

As she made her way back to her house, she remembered an old saying of her earthly days: *What cannot be cured must be endured*. ‘I must learn to live with that noisy musician and his loud students. Maybe I should make the most of his company just as he tried to make use of my presence to get work done...Hmmm. Maybe I should learn music!’

In newfound eagerness, the ghost sped back home swiftly. That night she again woke up the musician. “You’re quite right. There’s room for the two of us here. Why don’t you teach me music? My mother always said I had a sweet voice. Do you want to hear me sing?” and she started a song in her shrill and thin wail.

“Stop, stop!” yelled the horrified musician, but she would not stop till it was dawn.

That morning, the first thing the musician did was to go house-hunting!



Puri offers a variety of attractions to tourists. If you are religiously inclined, then there's the Jagannath temple for you. Do you love the seaside? Don't miss the Golden beach. Are you a foodie? Puri has a food market just for you.

Puri has one of the most beautiful beaches in our country, which is ideal for swimming and surfing.

Puri is well known for its temples: especially the strikingly beautiful Jagannath Temple built in the 12th century. The 65 m tall conical tower, is one of its many attractions. Built on a hill called *Nilachala*, the blue mountain, this temple is dedicated to Jagannath or Lord Vishnu.

The exquisite 8m Sun Pillar, which adorns the entrance to the temple, had once rested at the Konark Sun temple.

The annual Rath Yatra and Ananda Bazaar, the world's biggest food market, are two important features of the Jagannath Temple. The temple provides livelihood to more than 20,000 people!

Puri is also a shoppers' delight! There is a wide variety of handicrafts like miniature stone sculptures, woodcarvings, seashell items, *patta* painting on cloth, and appliqué work.

How to get there: Puri is about 60 km from Bhubaneswar and 35 km from Konark by road.

A QUIZ FOR YOU!

For children up to 14 years

CONTEST - III

1. What are the names of Lord Jagannath's sister and brother, who accompany him on the Rath Yatra?
.....
2. During the Rath Yatra, the idols are taken for a week's stay to a small temple, about 2 km away. Which?
.....
3. Where in Orissa would you find one of India's four temples dedicated to the 64 Yoginis?
.....

Write your answers legibly in the blank space provided, fill in the coupon below and send the entry to

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Gurpurab

*T*he month of November is marked by a very important festival in the Sikh calendar. This is *Gurpurab*, which means 'the festival of the guru'. The Sikhs celebrate 10 Gurpurabs in a year – the birth anniversary of each of the ten gurus of the *Khalsa Panth*. All Gurpurabs are considered auspicious, but special importance is given to the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, which occurs in the month of *Kartik*, coinciding with October or November.

As the Sikhs believe that Guru Nanak brought enlightenment to the world, his birth anniversary is also called *Prakash Utsav*, or the festival of lights.


The Gurpurab celebrations start three weeks before the actual day of the *Prakash Utsav*. For three weeks, Sikhs take out early morning processions, called *Prabhat Pheris*. Troupes singing *Shabads* or hymns go from one devotee's house to another. Devotees offer sweets and tea when the processions stop by their house.

Then follows a three-day *Akhand Path*, in which the *Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs, is read from Chandamama



the beginning to the end all through the day. When the *Akhand Path* ends, the other celebrations begin.

A day before the festival, the *Granth Sahib* is taken out from the gurudwaras in a procession. It is carried on a float decorated with flowers. The *Panch Pyaras* or the five-armed guards, who carry the *Nishan Sahibs* or the Sikh flags and standard, accompany the float. Local music troupes playing devotional music, and school children also join the procession, which gives the old and the in-



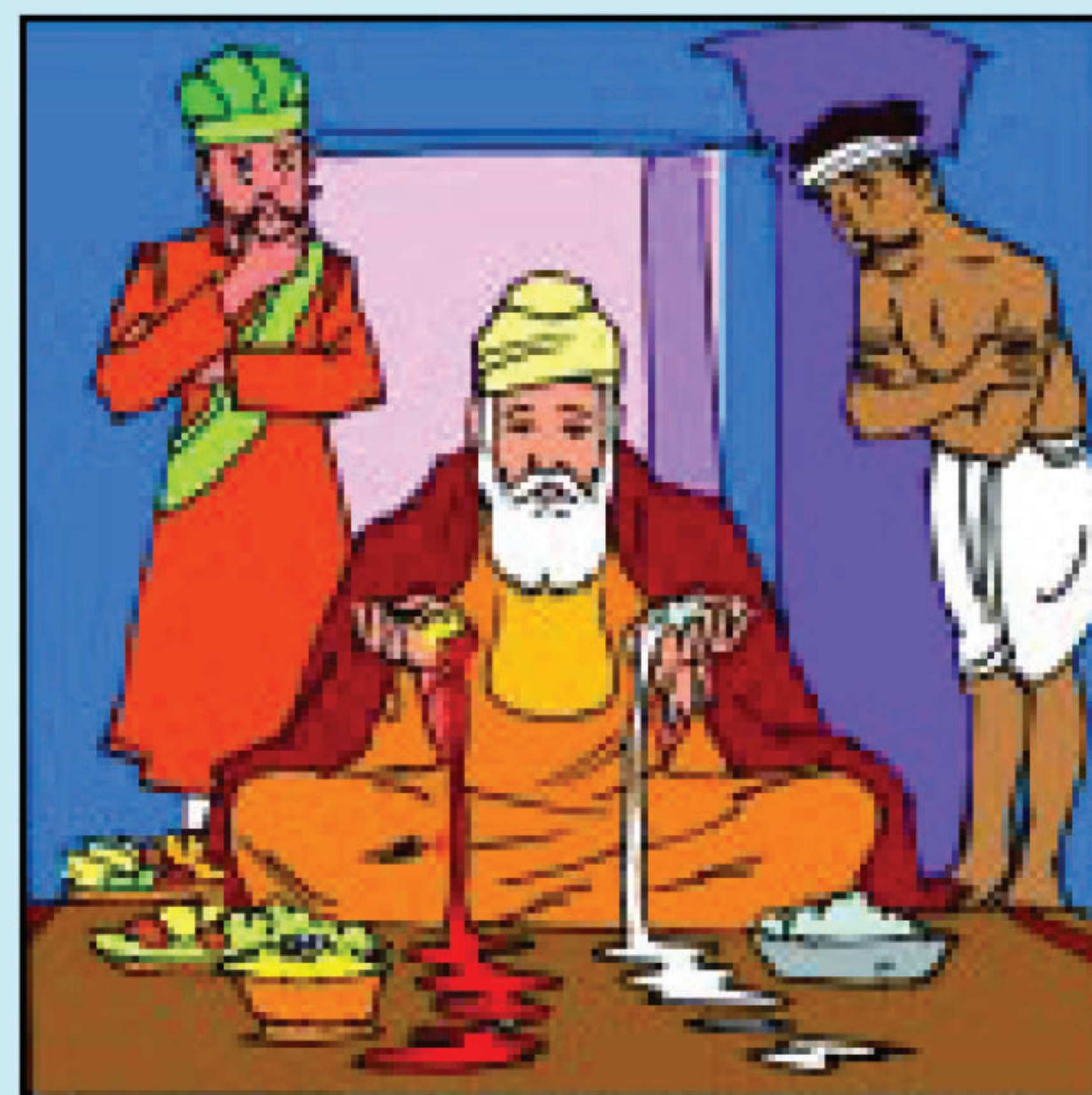
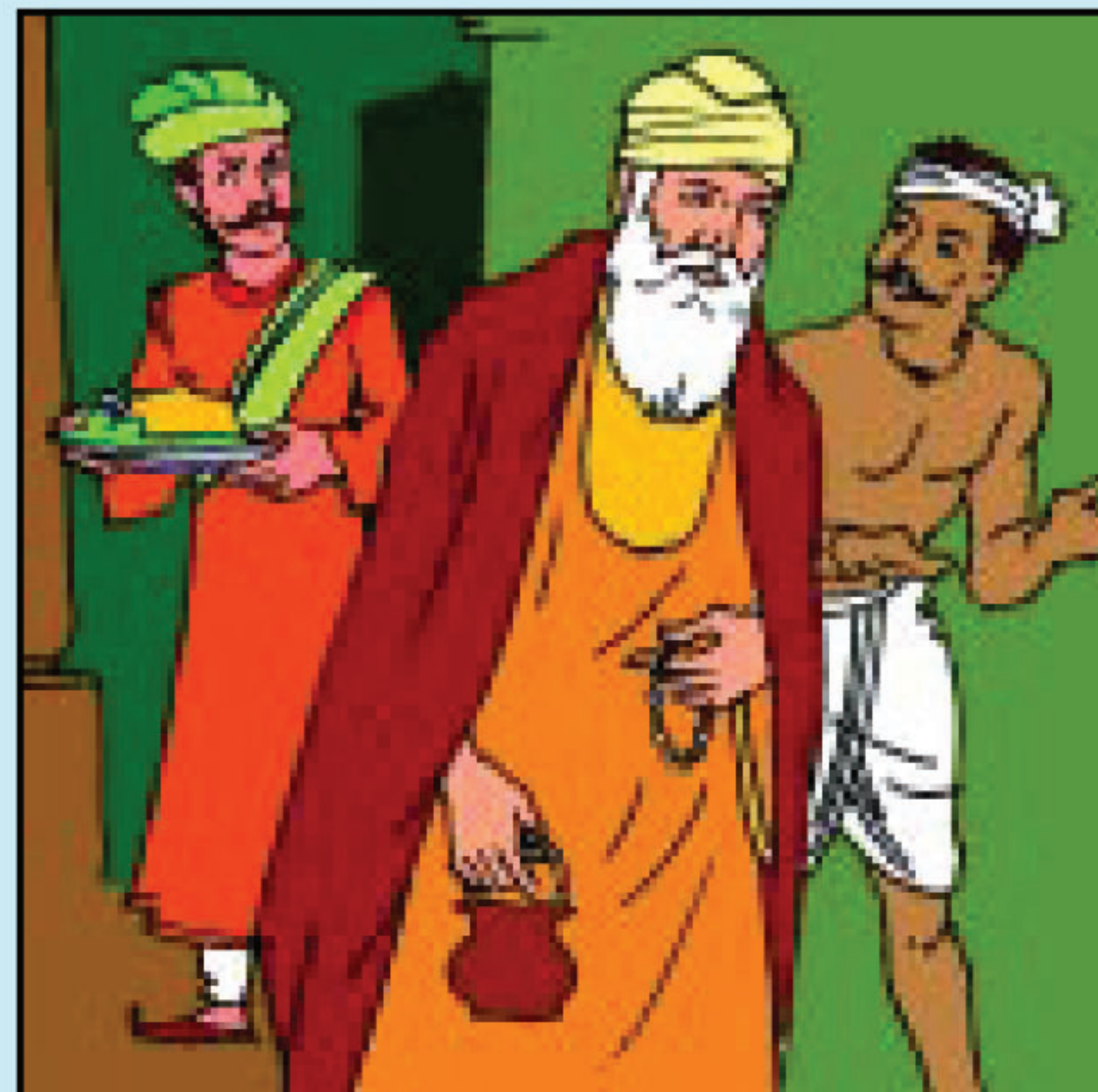
firm a chance to seek the blessings of the *Granth Sahib*, which is considered as the eternal guru of the Sikhs.

On GURPURAB, the Sikhs visit the gurudwaras, where special programmes and prayers take place. Devotees sing *kirtans* or devotional songs. There is distribution of sweets. Both Sikhs and non-Sikhs who visit a gurudwara that day are welcome to the *langar* or community meal. At night, houses and gurudwaras are lit with lamps and candles.

A Day from the Guru's Life

It is said that Guru Nanak once had an invitation to a feast from Malik Bhago, a rich and important man of Saidpur in Punjab. Lalo, a poor low caste carpenter, invited the guru to share food with him on the same day. Nanak chose to go with him.

Malik Bhago was quite angry. He went to the Guru and demanded why he had not accepted his invitation. Guru Nanak sent for the meals served by Malik Bhago and Lalo. He took a bit of each in his hands and squeezed them. Blood oozed out of the food from Malik Bhago's house, while milk came out of Lalo's simple food. Malik Bhago confessed that his wealth had been created by dishonesty, and admitted that Lalo's food was the result of honest, hard work.



Guru Nanak's Life and Times

Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu family on October 20, 1469 at Talwadi, which is now part of Lahore in Pakistan. His father was Kalyan Das Mehta, and his mother was known as Mata Tripta.

Nanak was an unusually gifted child. He mastered many languages at a very early age. He had both Muslim and Hindu friends. In school, he always questioned his teachers about truth and God.

Even as a child, he was not keen to enjoy material comforts. His father decided to introduce him to the world of commerce, so that his interest in worldly life might be kindled. He sent Nanak to work in the state granary in Sultanpur, in Jalandhar district of Punjab.

At Sultanpur, Nanak would daily bathe in river Bien which ran through the town. One day, he plunged into the river and did not

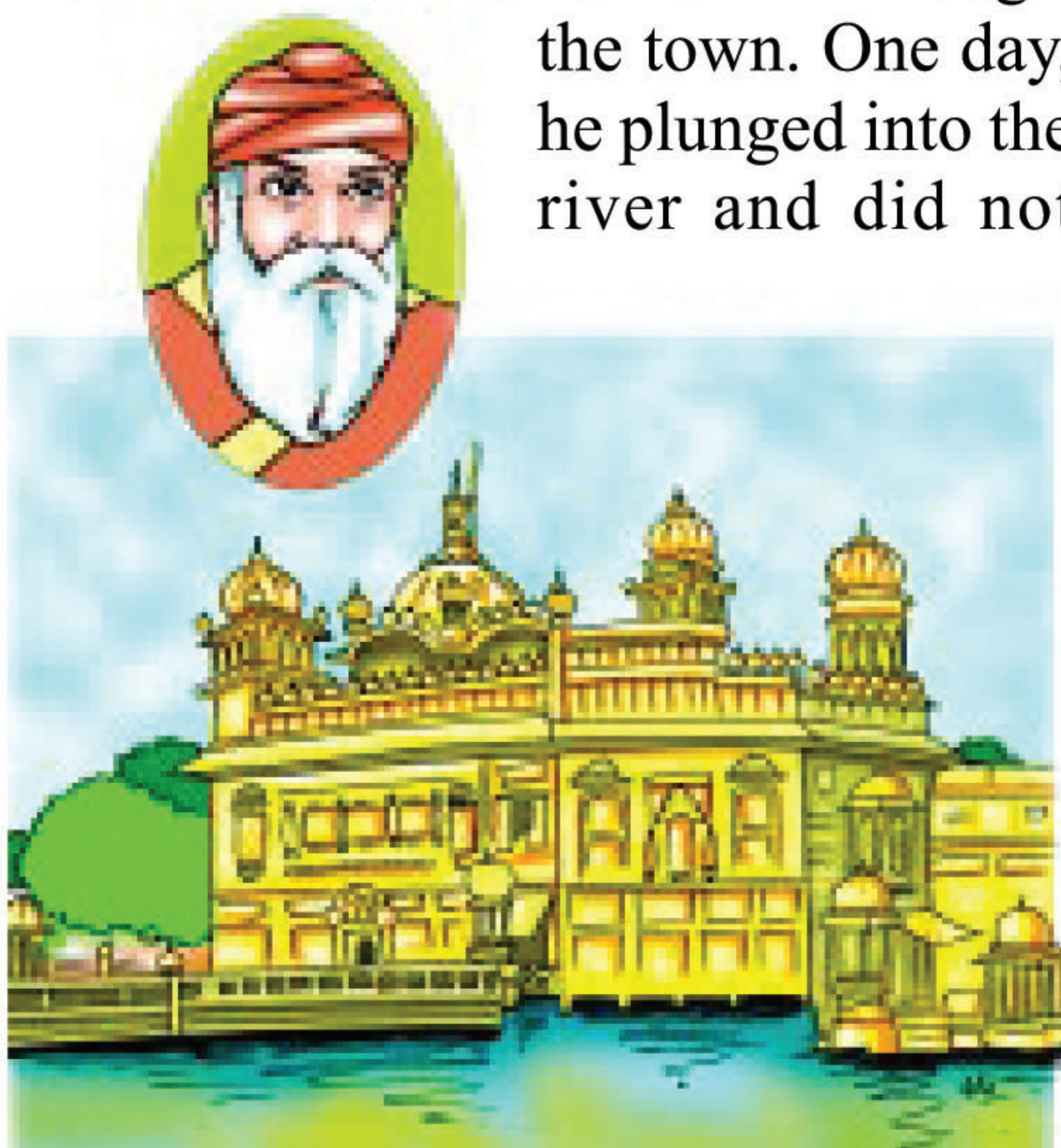


come out for three days. The experience changed him for life. Devotees believe that he saw God and was enlightened by Him. God had entrusted him with the task of spreading the glory of His name to the people.

From then on Guru Nanak travelled widely and preached that there was only one God – the Omnipotent and the Omnipresent. He was against polytheism and idol worship.

During Guru Nanak's time, there were bitter conflicts between the Hindus and Muslims. He preached peace, harmony, and love for all things. He also raised his voice for the downtrodden and worked for their upliftment.

He is revered as the founder of Sikhism, the world's youngest religion. Guru Nanak went into *Samadhi* on September 22, 1539.



When they were young.....

In this Children's Special, let's look at some surprising facts about the childhood of some great men and women....



Gutsy Little Woman

Louisa May Alcott, the author of 'Little Women', had a family that never really believed in her ability as a writer. In fact, they encouraged her to find work as a servant or seamstress.

Sounding strange?

Beethoven, one of the greatest music composers who ever lived, handled the violin awkwardly and preferred playing his own compositions. His teacher called him hopeless as a composer.



Evolution of a genius

Charles Darwin, father of the 'Theory of Evolution', gave up a medical career. His father was convinced that he was good for nothing. In his autobiography, Darwin wrote: "I was considered by my father a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect."

The loony toony guy

Walt Disney, the man who gave the world fabulous cartoons like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, was fired by a newspaper editor for lack of ideas. He also went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland.



The best dreamer

Vinayak was a wonderful cook. He had no family and, therefore, roamed from village to village finding himself an odd job here and another there. After a few years, he decided to settle down in one place. And he found a job in a rich man's household.

His employer, Raghuvir, was a miser. He did not marry because it would have meant children, and he did not want to divide his wealth among his children.

As old age caught up with him, he felt the need for somebody who would cook and wash for him. A miser that he was, he did not want to engage servants who had families. Does it need mention that he was overjoyed when he heard about Vinayak's background? He fitted the bill perfectly and was hired on the spot. But Raghuvir nagged Vinayak with his penny-pinching ways. He ate very poorly and would also not let Vinayak eat well.

* * *

It was Diwali and every household in the village was busy gearing up for the festivities. People cleaned their houses, decorated them, and prepared a wide variety of sweetmeat. Vinayak also prepared the customary special dishes for the occasion. He had done



them without his master's knowledge. 'After all, Diwali is special. Surely, master wouldn't mind,' he thought.

Raghuvir sat for his meals on the day of Diwali. The array of dishes spread before him astounded him. "What does this mean, Vinayak? Have you cooked for an entire week?" Raghuvir gnashed his teeth as he spoke to his cook.

"Master, it's Diwali, and I thought you should eat sumptuously at least one day in a year," said Vinayak faintly.

“Of course! Why shouldn’t we?” said Raghuvir loudly, for he thought, if he said anything to the contrary, the cook might despise him.

‘Squander away money on food! And why should I let this chap eat good food?’ he thought to himself.

Raghuvir decided to eat as much as he could of the dishes prepared. The dishes were indeed very delicious, and he ate almost everything that had been prepared, till his tummy swelled big and round. But how sad! However much he tried, Raghuvir could not eat the *jilebis*. But the selfish fellow did not want Vinayak to eat them. He thought of a plan to stop his servant from having the *jilebis*.

“Vinayak, *jilebis* will taste good only a few hours after they have been prepared. Keep them aside. I’ll eat them in the evening,” he declared.

Soon it was night, but Raghuvir did not feel the slightest twinge of hunger. But he wanted all the *jilebis* to himself. So, he called Vinayak and said, “Why don’t we have a little contest between us? That’ll make the festival time more gala. Both of us shall go to sleep tonight and try to dream about something interesting. Whoever narrates the best

dream tomorrow morning can have the *jilebis* for himself.”

Vinayak could not retort to his master and replied: “Very well, master.” Raghuvir went to bed with a happy heart. ‘I’ll be hungry tomorrow morning and shall finish off those *jilebis*. I shall declare that my dream is the most wonderful one, and the idiot won’t be able to answer me back,’ he thought.

The cook soon heard his master snoring blissfully. His stomach rumbled with hunger. Quickly tiptoeing to the kitchen, he opened the dish containing the *jilebis*. ‘Hmm... they look so tempting!’ The poor chap had not eaten anything since morning, as his devil of a master had gobbled up everything that he had cooked. The hungry fellow ate every single *jilebi* and went off to sleep.

* * *

Raghuvir woke up the next morning and called Vinayak. “Well, what did you dream about last night?” he asked Vinayak.

“Master, I had the most frightful dream,” replied the cook, crossing his hands against his chest.

“Don’t you want to know what I dreamt? I had a most wonderful dream.



I dreamt that I married a beautiful princess, and became the king of her kingdom. Soon after my coronation, the queen and I sat in the durbar amidst a thronging crowd of courtiers and attendants. We watched a breathtaking performance by the best dancers and musicians of the land the entire day. I had a splendid time,” said Raghuvir. “You haven’t told me about your dream yet,” he added.

“Master,” said the cook sadly, “as soon as I fell asleep, Mother Kali jumped in front of me, roaring fiercely. ‘You wretch, how dare you fast from morning till evening on a day of joy? Now, go to the kitchen and eat up the *jilebis* in a jiffy or else I’ll strangle you,’ she threatened me. I shuddered in fear. ‘O Mother! I can’t eat the *jilebis*. My master and I have agreed that only he who has the best dream shall eat them. Kindly don’t compel me. I can’t go back on my promise to my beloved master,’ I said. But she wouldn’t listen to me. ‘Don’t talk back. Go into the kitchen right now and eat the *jilebis*. If you disobey me, I’ll kill you,’ she said. O master, I didn’t want to die on Diwali day and had to eat the *jilebis*.”

The master was irritated with the long tale. “How is it that I wasn’t woken up by the noise? I was sleeping right next to your room. You could’ve shouted for

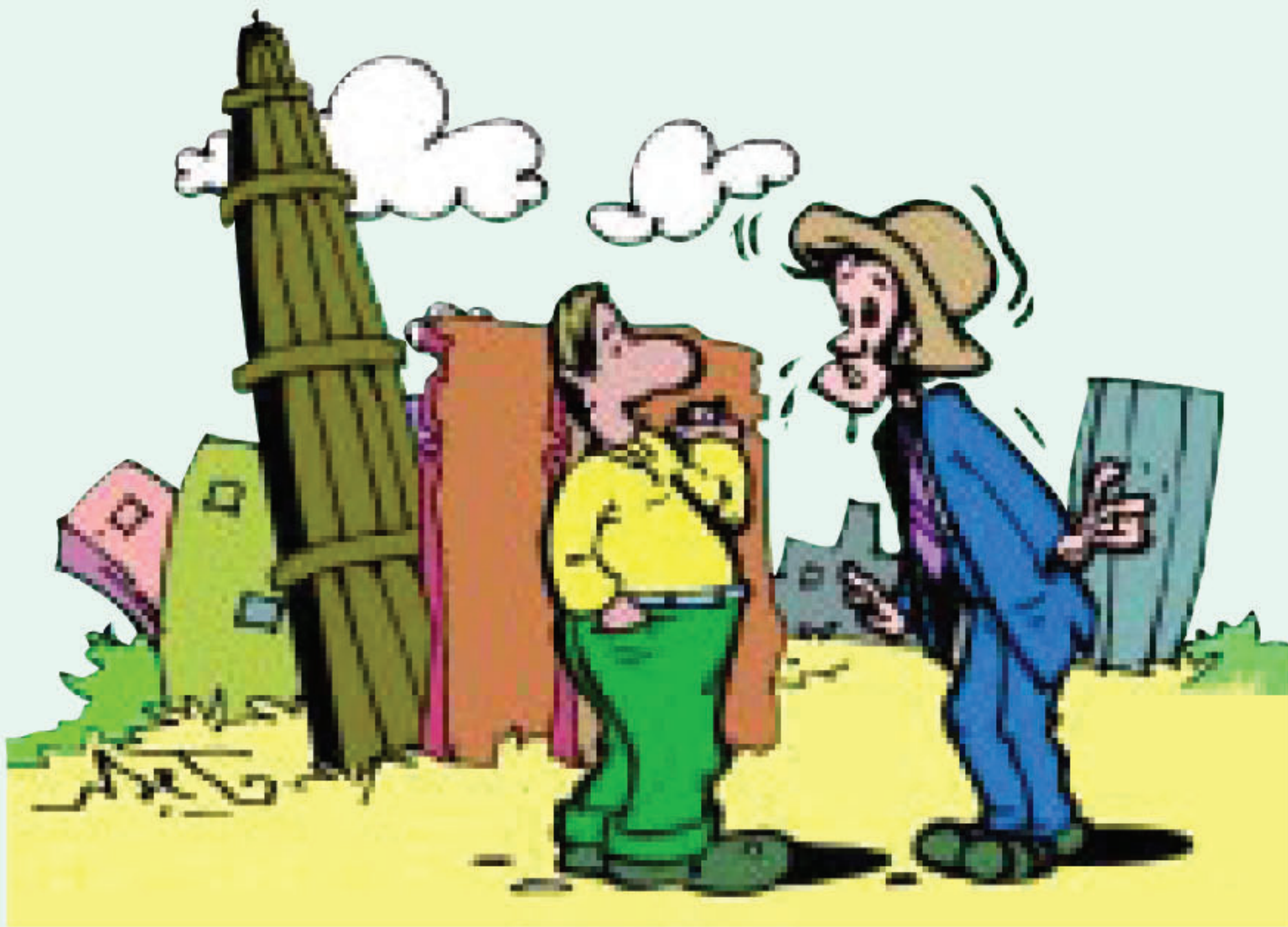


me and I’d have come to your rescue, you wretch. You needn’t have eaten all those *jilebis* under threat, after all.”

“I did think of seeking your help, Master. But you were in that big durbar in the queen’s company. There were so many people around you, the courtiers, dancers, and musicians. When at last I picked up courage to approach you, your guards stopped me and pushed me away. They wouldn’t let me come anywhere near you,” replied Vinayak, with as much pity as he could muster.

Raghuvir had no words and was ashamed at his own foolish trick. Vinayak had proved too smart for him. And Raghuvir did not want to lose a reliable and good servant like him. From then on, he not only ate well, but let Vinayak eat properly.

Jokes from you



John from Great Britain once visited his friend, Bhola in Delhi. On the first day, Bhola took John to Taj Mahal. Bhola explained, “It took twenty years to build this!”

John: In England, it would have been constructed in 10 years.

On the second day they went to Red Fort. There, Bhola said, “This fort was made in 10 years.”

John: In our England we would have built it in five years.

They then visited the Lotus Temple. Bhola said, “This beautiful temple was constructed in five years.”

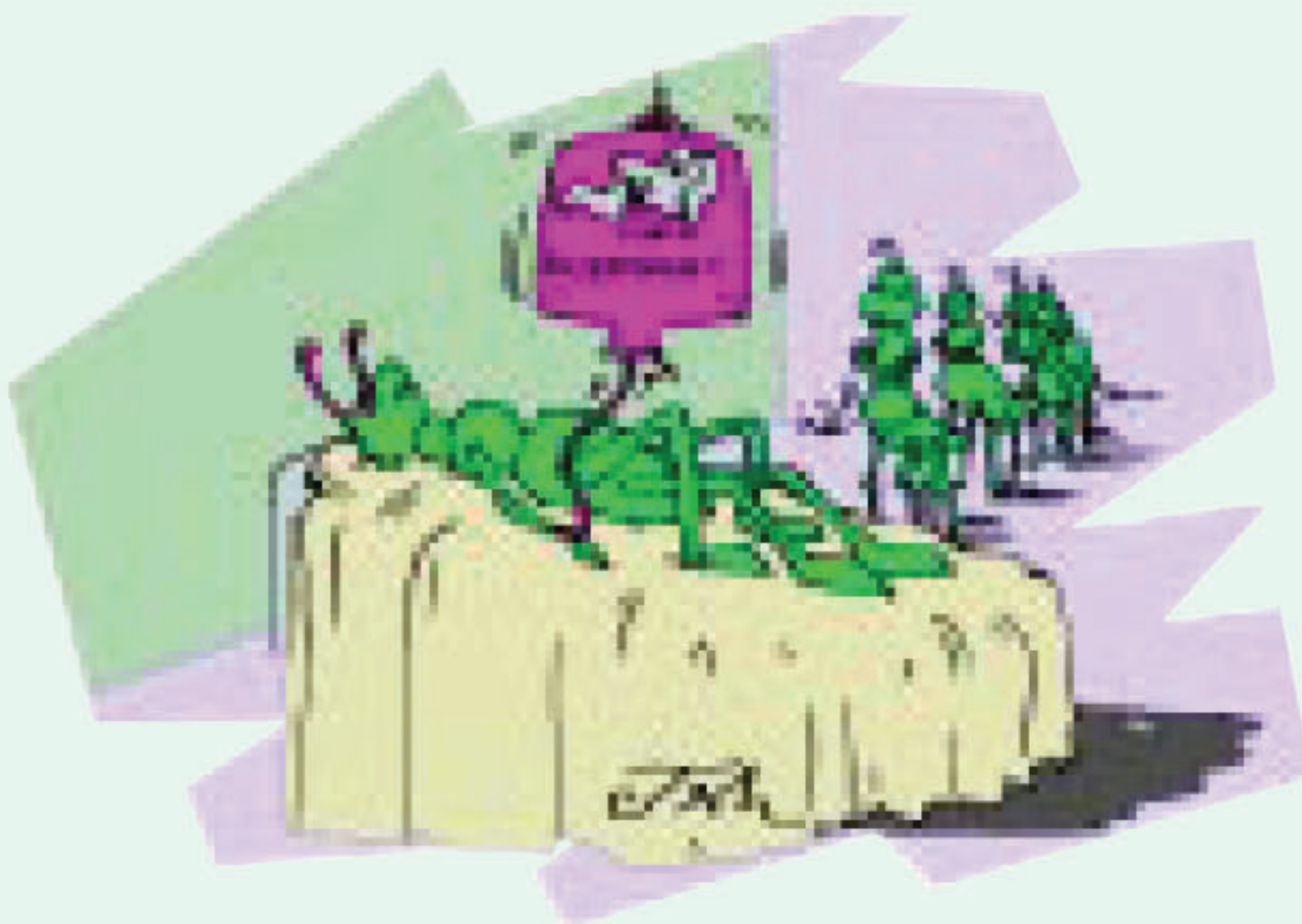
John: In our place we would have completed it in five months.

They returned home and visited the Qutb Minar the next day.

John: This is very close and why didn't we see it yesterday?

Bhola: How could we see it yesterday? It was built only today!

– Skandh Sharma, Ghaziabad



A fox asked an ant, “Where are you going in such a hurry, Dear Ant?”

The ant replied, “Oh! My rakhee brother, the elephant met with an accident. Our blood group is the same. So, I am going to donate blood for him.”

– Prachi C. Chandrabushan Parkar,
Mumbai



Beggar: Sir, give me a cake!

Baker: Won't you accept bread today?

Beggar: Bread is fine. But today is my birthday, so I was wondering if I could get a cake.

– Vijendra Singh, Rajasthan



New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala

Viswasen's Ambitions

Adapted from a story by

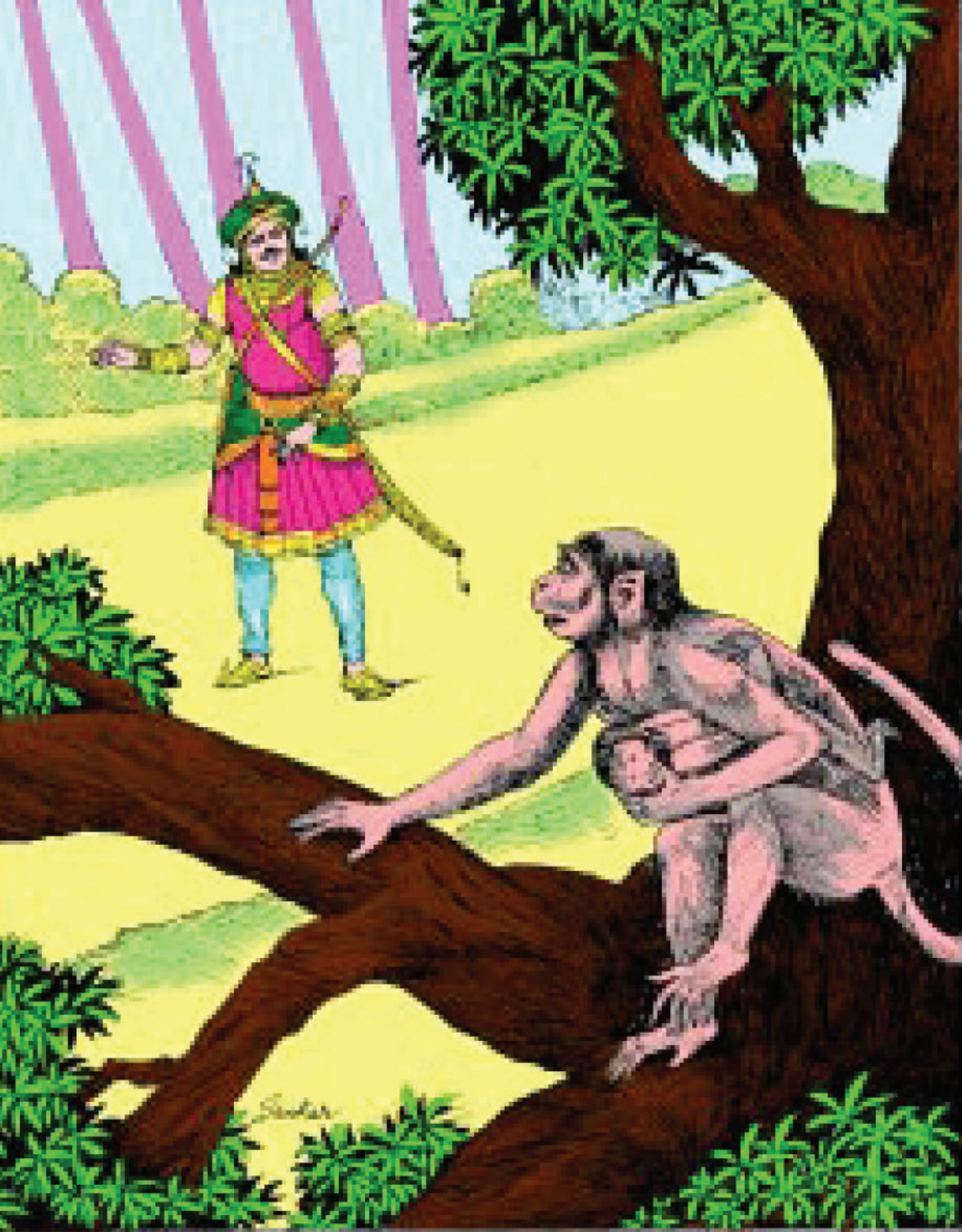


**P. Pavan Kumar
Bellary**

King Vikram relentlessly followed the Vetala back to the ancient tree. He brought the corpse down from the tree and slung it over his shoulder. As he weaved his way through gliding ghouls, grinning skulls, and screeching bats, the Vetala in the corpse spoke up:

“Why do you covet danger, even after I’ve pointed out to you

November 2001



how foolish and risky your effort is? You know, don't you, that there are wild animals lurking here, and ghosts and vampires too that can harm you? No Kshatriya should endanger himself so foolishly. When I see you toiling hard to catch me, I'm convinced that you are driven by some ulterior motive.

"Maybe you want to gain some power that will help you invade the neighbouring states and thus extend your empire. Maybe you want to gather a huge army and plunder a lot of wealth with the help of sorcery. But such things are impossible; they will remain mere daydreams. It is my duty to warn you of the risks that you're taking and the futility of your endeavour. Pay heed to the story of

King Viswasen. Just when every dream of his was about to be fulfilled, he changed his mind and ruined himself. I'm afraid you too might make a similar critical mistake at a crucial moment in your life. Listen to King Viswasen's story!"

And this is what the Vetala narrated:

King Viswasen of Mithila loved hunting. Nothing could make him miss his hunting expeditions, not even a crisis in his kingdom.

Once he led his troops for hunting as usual. For two days, he and his men enjoyed the chase. On the third day, as he decided to return to his kingdom, he heard two of his men talking about a hermitage in the forest. Viswasen wished to meet the sage who lived there. He told his soldiers: "You may all return to the camp and wait for me there. I shall seek the blessings of the sage and join you before sunset."

The king walked into the dense forest. The kingdom was reeling under a famine: the monsoon had failed for the second successive year. As he strode along, his mind preoccupied by the crisis that loomed large over his kingdom, a baby monkey just ahead caught his attention. It fell off a tree in front of him and started wailing in pain. The king hurried forward to lift him, but even before he reached the animal, a female monkey, obviously the mother, jumped down from a nearby tree, picked up the baby and swung off in a hurry.

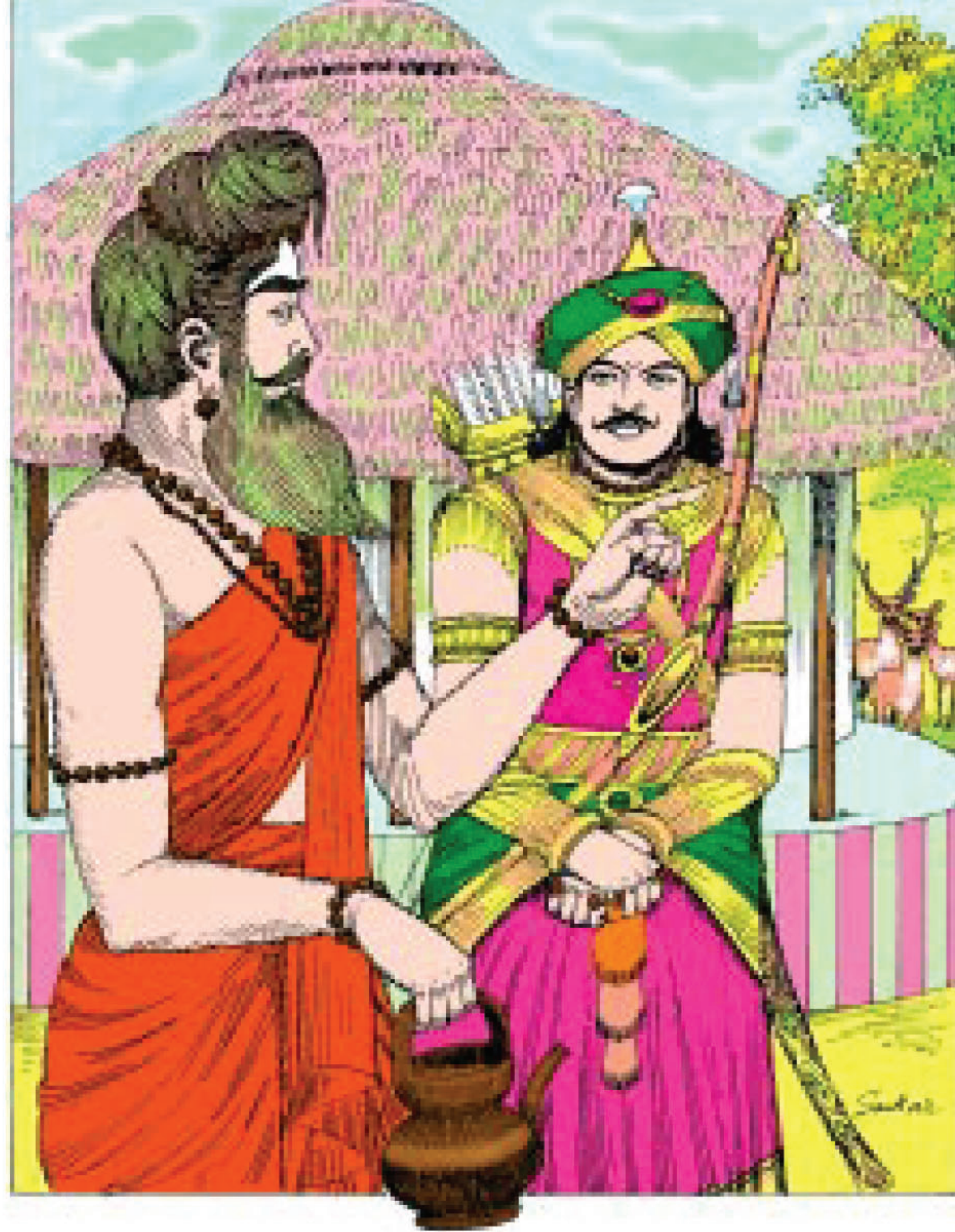
As she brushed past the king, the mother monkey viciously scratched his arms. This disturbed the king's mind considerably. Was the mother monkey angry with him?

He soon reached the hermitage and was warmly welcomed by the sage. "You've been hunting, and that is something you love very much! And yet you don't look happy. Why is it so?" asked the sage.

Viswasen sighed and narrated the incident of the monkey. "Here I am, trying to help the little monkey, and all the mother does in return is to scratch me! Is there no good left in the world?" he wondered. "Don't we even have the authority to help defenceless animals? If this goes on, one would hesitate to run to the help of a fellow creature!"

The sage laughed. "O king, I think you're not one of those who think deeply on any issue. For, look at the irony of what you say now. You love hunting and have killed many an animal without a thought of what would happen to its innocent orphaned babies. And you now feel pity for the baby monkey you came across. It is indeed surprising! Just look at the condition of your kingdom. The rain god seems to have abandoned us and a famine seems imminent. Have you thought of a solution to this problem?"

The king replied, "O holy one, this situation is not really unusual. The rains fail once in a few years and we face this crisis of famine and drought. My



ancestors have gone through this crisis. And I am facing it now."

"Then what can be done about it?" asked the sage.

"O holy one, there is a solution. And that is, to raise a powerful army, and invade and take over the neighbouring states that are prosperous. The wealth and the granary of these kingdoms can be put to good use for the sake of our own people."

"Oh, so you wish to garner wealth and power and become great! But there's another easy way to do it! If you go just four *kos* from here to the north, you will find some mountains of silver. Take as much silver as you want! It's all yours."

Viswasen thanked the holy man and



walked in the direction the sage had showed. Soon he saw the silver mountains gleaming in the sun. “O god, what a lot of silver! I shall need hundreds of vehicles to take all this silver home!” he shouted in joy.

As he looked around in wonder, he noticed a hermitage close by. A hermit was standing by, feeding two lovely fawns with tender leaves. At some distance stood a male and a female deer, obviously the parents of the fawns, watching the scene. Viswasen was moved. ‘How beautiful these creatures are! And I’ve been cruelly killing them all along! What a sinner I am!’ he thought regretfully.

He hesitated to move forward and introduce himself. Perhaps his presence might frighten the innocent animals.

But the hermit looked up and beckoned him. “Please join us, O king. How come you’re here in this forest all alone?”

Viswasen paid his obeisance to the hermit and explained all about the silver mountains. He frankly disclosed that he wanted to take back silver to help him buy food for his starving people. The hermit listened to all that he had to say and then commented: “You seem to be satisfied with these silver mountains. But if you go four *kos* to the north, you’ll come across gold mountains.”

Viswasen was thrilled to hear this. He hurriedly bade goodbye to the hermit and made for the mountains of gold. When he came across the golden peaks glinting in the sun, he was jubilant. “All that gold belongs to me!” he shouted hysterically. “I am the wealthiest king on earth.”

Just then a yogi, who had been bathing in a pond nearby, came into sight. He heard the king’s triumphant shout. “O king!” he addressed him. “If these mountains of gold excite you so much, what will you do when you see the diamond mines that lie just four *kos* to the north from here?”

Diamond mines? The astounded king thanked the yogi profusely and followed his directions. Just as the yogi had said, he came upon the diamond mines. The diamonds were lying scattered on the ground, sparkling and winking in the sunlight. There were

also several cobras which stood guard over the diamonds, with their hoods spread.

Viswasen went mad with excitement. He raved in trembling tones, “My soldiers can kill these snakes. I shall bring camels and elephants, load these diamonds on them, and take them home. This wealth will bring prosperity to my kingdom. We shall buy food and all material comforts from all our prosperous neighbours. Why, I can raise a great army and make these neighbours my vassals. I shall become the emperor of the world, the most powerful man on the earth. I shall then be the happiest man in the universe.”

Just then he heard a loud booming voice: “O king, there are many men in this world who are wealthier, luckier, and greater than you are! And I am one of them!”

A strange luminous figure suddenly appeared before King Viswasen. He stood rooted to the spot, as if hypnotised.

Then the saintly figure that glowed so strangely, continued: “So your dreams are coming true, O king? You wished to be wealthy, powerful, great! You wished to be a great conquering emperor, the dread of neighbouring kingdoms. The gold, silver and diamonds that you have just found will bring all that you have desired and more. But have you ever thought of the consequences of your foolish



actions? How many innocent people will be sacrificed at the altar of your avarice? How much wealth and property will be destroyed!”

Viswasen replied boldly, “O great soul! I’m sure you know that the *dharma* of a *kshatriya*, and that too a king, binds him to war and battles. Every king is expected to invade territories and take over other states in the interests of his people.”

The strange man laughed and said: “If every king, in the name of *kshatriya dharma*, kept invading other territories, can you imagine the misery, tensions and insecurity that the common people would go through? Don’t think you can justify your actions in the name of *kshatriya dharma*. I’ll grant you one boon – either you can

become a great emperor by virtue of your power and strength, or you will, in your lifetime, achieve greatness as a king who paid attention to the welfare of his people. But mind you, you cannot have both!” And the strange figure disappeared.

Viswasen immediately retraced his steps and returned to where his soldiers awaited him. He addressed them: “My men! Henceforth leave your arms safe at home. From now on, your duty will be to tour every nook and corner of our country, and then come back and tell me the conditions that prevail. Right now let’s return to the palace.”

After narrating the story, the Vetala spoke to King Vikram: “Viswasen had always wanted to be wealthy and powerful. His desires looked likely to be fulfilled. He found an immense treasure that would have filled his coffers and brought him name, fame, and power. Besides, the strange figure had promised to grant him the boon of becoming a great powerful emperor or of becoming a noble king

who cared for the welfare of his masses. Why didn’t he opt for the boon that would have made him a great emperor? If you know the answer and yet choose to remain silent, your head will split into a thousand pieces!”

King Vikram answered immediately: “A man who is ambitious to be wealthy and powerful need not necessarily be cruel and insensitive to the sufferings of others. Viswasen was moved to pity by the plight of the baby monkey and to remorse when he saw the young fawns being fed by the hermit. Besides, he had just been advised by the strange figure about the evil consequences of conquests and battles. And that is why he decided to take up the cause of his people rather than aspire to be a great conqueror.”

No sooner had King Vikram broken his silence than the Vetala once again gave him the slip and flew back to the ancient tree. Vikram drew his sword and went after the Vetala.



MALLU TAKES REVENGE



Story by
M. Sankar Rao
Vijayanagaram

One morning, in Vanpur, Mallu wakes up feeling fresh, bright and hungry!



There are only carrots for breakfast.



He wants something spicy.



Ah! Smells divine!



He smells the food cooking in Bhola Bear's kitchen.

He makes a beeline for Bhola Bear's house....



... and collides headlong with Filthy Fox.



How dare you knock into me? I'll eat you alive.



Filthy is furious and bares his teeth at Mallu.

Poor Mallu is terrified and begs of Filthy's pardon.



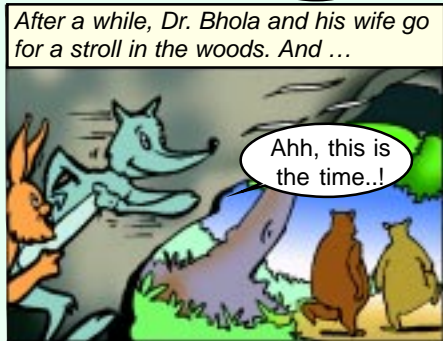
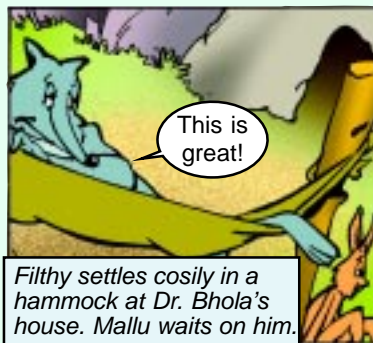
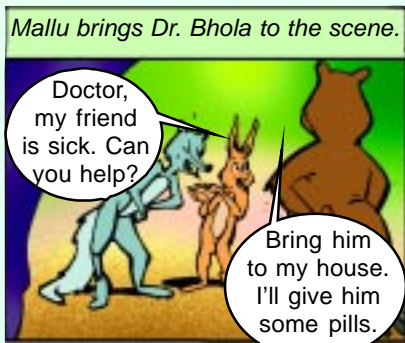
How shall I eat you: raw or roasted?



Filthy is adamant about having Mallu for lunch.

Mallu has an idea to fool Filthy.





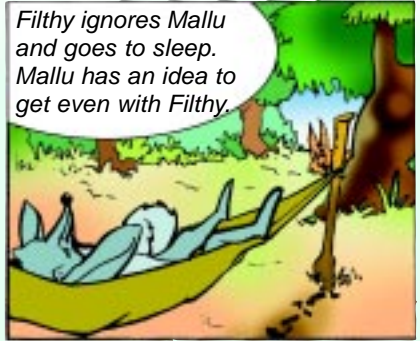
Filthy belches loudly after eating.



Mallu is annoyed at Filthy's selfishness. He swears revenge.



Filthy ignores Mallu and goes to sleep. Mallu has an idea to get even with Filthy.



You've had it, you greedy fella!



He rushes back into the kitchen and picks up the fish bones.

He lays a trail of bones from the pot to the hammock.



Filthy is blissfully asleep and snoring.



Now, let me watch the fun!



I'm hungry!

Let's have lunch right away!

Dr. Bhola and his wife come back home after a walk.



To her horror, Mrs. Bhola finds the pot empty.

Who has eaten our food?



Now I know!

Dr. Bhola and Mrs. Bhola tiptoe up to Filthy and thrash him.



Serves you right, greedy fellow!



This is very painful. I really need to see a doctor.

Greed never pays.



The end

The Snake's Gift

Rama lived in Rampur, a small village in Uttar Pradesh. She was a beautiful girl. Her mother had passed away, and she was ill-treated by her stepmother and step-sister, Shyamala. She had to do all the household chores.

Her stepmother would yell at her, "You lazy creature! Finish washing the clothes fast. You've to take lunch for your father, and prepare my tea..." This had become a daily routine for Rama.

One day, while she was walking down the fields with the lunch for her father, something from a tree fell on her. She started crying. Just then, a snake came that way. Seeing her cry, he stopped by. "Why are you crying, little girl?" he asked.



The girl wiped her eyes and explained. The snake offered to help her if she would prepare a garland of flowers for his sister.

He said, "My sister has to attend a function tomorrow, and she wants a garland. If you make one for her, I'll help you."

Rama went around and collected flowers from the nearby fields. She then made them into a garland. The snake was very happy. He said, "You respected the words of a snake. You're very kind-hearted. I'll give you two boons – you'll become very beautiful and you'll have a very sweet voice."

Saying so, the snake slithered away. When Rama reached home, her stepmother was surprised to hear her voice and to see how beautiful she had suddenly become. She asked her what had happened. Rama told her everything, except her encounter with the snake.

The very next day, her stepmother sent Shyamala with the lunch for her father. Shyamala, too, encountered



Jayanta Nanda
Sambalpur

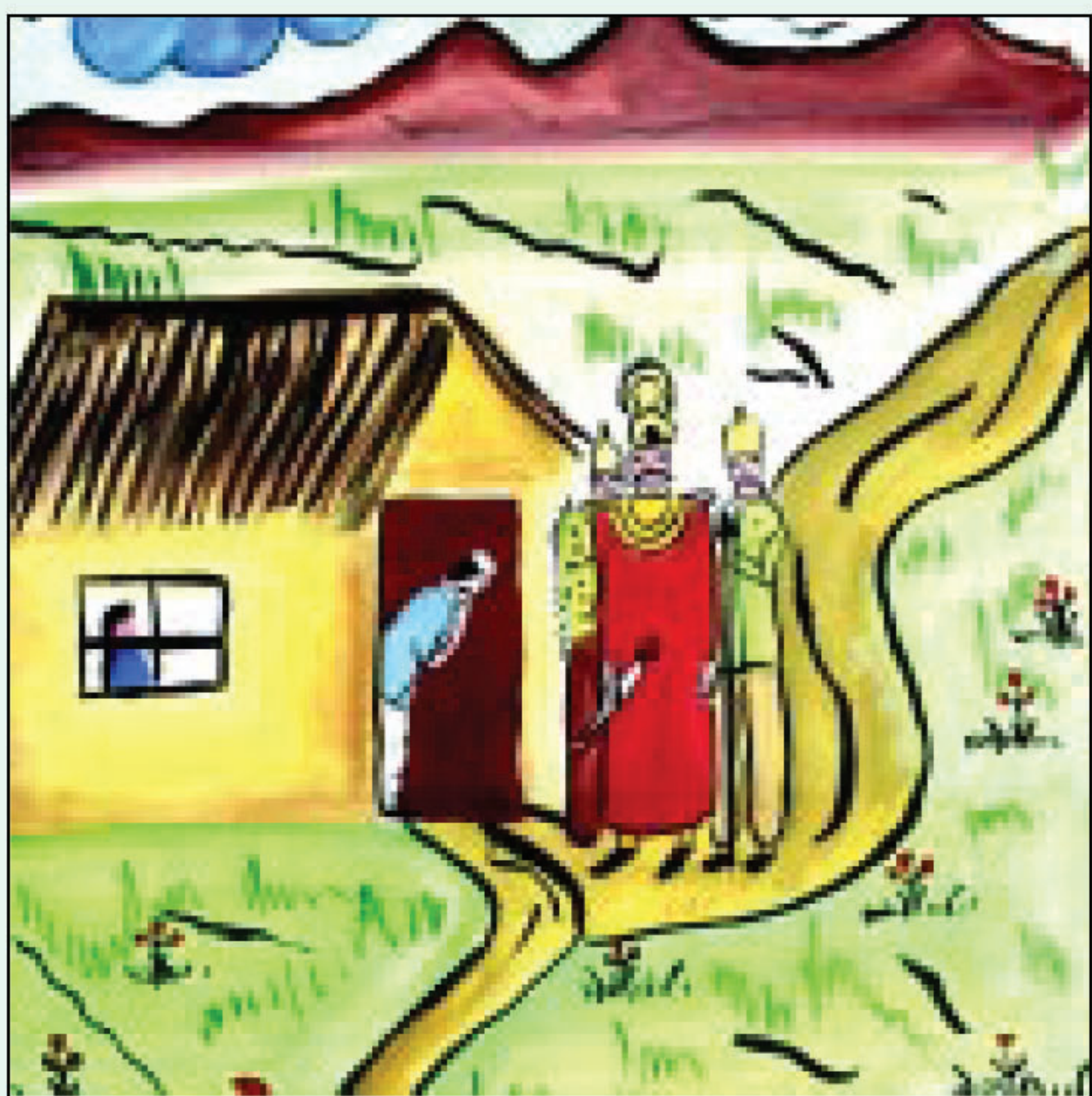


P. Abhishek
Hyderabad

the snake on the way. She did not know that it was the same snake that had given her step-sister the two boons. She assumed that it was some genie on a tree. So, when the snake asked her for a garland, she just kicked it away.

The snake then cursed her: “You’ll have the most ugly face in the universe. Everyone will detest you.”

When she reached home, her mother was shocked to see her daughter with such an ugly face. She did not know what to do. Shyamala and her mother were too upset. Rama



was also upset, seeing her mother and sister suffer like this.

She was a very kind girl. She decided to go to the snake and request it to intervene and remove the spell.

When Rama met the snake and requested it to restore to Shyamala her original face, the snake was touched by her gesture. “You’re a very good girl. In spite of their ill treatment, you

wish for their well-being. I’ll grant you your wish.”

The snake continued: “I’ll also tell you something. The king of this country will pass by your village next week. If you entertain him with a melodious song in your sweet voice, he’ll take good care of you. You’ll become a princess soon.”


As predicted by the snake, the king visited the village where Rama lived. When the village elders gathered at the community hall to welcome him, they requested Rama to sing an invocation to inaugurate the function. Imagine the king’s wonder when he heard the wonderful song rendered by the young girl. He immediately called for her father and said he would adopt her. Of course, Rama’s father was only too happy for her, though he knew he would miss his sweet daughter. But Rama would not agree so easily. “I can’t leave my father and my dear mother and sister!” she insisted.

So, the king proposed that the whole family moved to the capital where they could be employed in the palace and be happy in the company of their dear Rama, who would become the princess of the land. Rama’s step-mother and sister felt ashamed of the way they had treated her and asked for her forgiveness.



**Kindness
overcomes
evil**

The donkey's lesson



Vasu kept a dog, a donkey, and a hen in his homestead. The donkey used to be tied at the backyard where it was fed. The dog was tied in the verandah. When Vasu returned from work, the dog would welcome him by wagging his tail, and joyfully jumping at him. Vasu, too, openly reciprocated the dog's affection: he took him in his arms, caressed, patted, and played with him. He would give biscuits and *roti* pieces to the dog which would run around the room happily.

Poor donkey had to slog hard. He was tied to the *chakki* to extract oil from groundnuts. He had to carry firewood from the jungle to the house. He had to take heavy farm implements from the house to the fields.



One day, the donkey felt very sad. He pitied himself for the hard life he led. He envied the dog's life. In the evening, as he was pouring out his woes to the dog and the hen, he told the dog: "You do no work here and yet you get very good food. I've to carry heavy loads and I'm given tasteless food. Oh God! When will this injustice end?"

The dog protested. "My life isn't as easy as you think!" he retorted. "I'm let loose at night to guard the house. That is the only time I'm free. For the

rest of the day, I remain chained in the verandah! On the other hand, you're not chained or tied during the day. You're free, you see much of the world, and what's more, you enjoy the company of our master the whole day!"

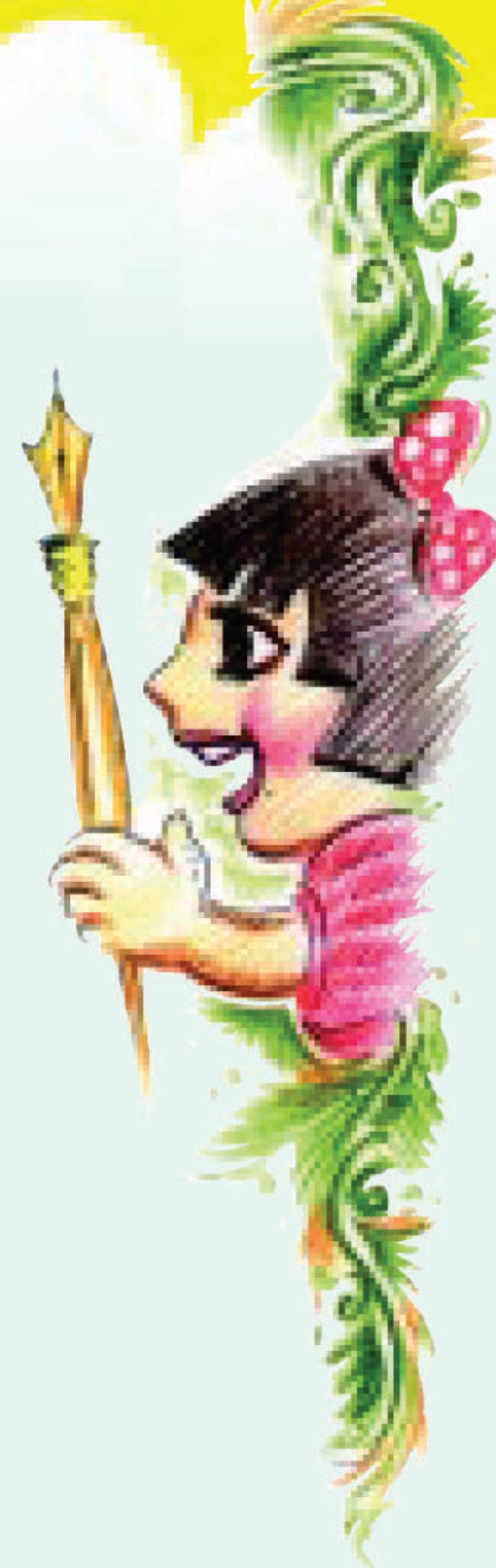
But the donkey was not convinced. The hen laughed and laughed. "My good friends, we must all do our duty. I lay



Prachi C.
Chandrabushan
Parkar, Mumbai



Ashish G.
Shetty
Mumbai



eggs, and they are all taken away. It is my duty to lay eggs and give them up to the master. I'm happy to do it. Why should I want to be like someone else? I know that when I stop laying eggs, I will end up on the table! Yet I don't think one should envy others," she said.

But the donkey only became more and more jealous of the little dog, until one day he was quite wild with envy. He entered the house and started wagging his tail and running around in circles where Vasu was sitting. He tried to lick Vasu's feet. He wanted to sit on Vasu's lap, but he could not. He wanted to do everything that the dog did. He wanted to please the master and enjoy a comfortable life.

But his foolish capers only made Vasu mad with anger. This was because when the donkey leapt around the

place, he broke many things in the room; he toppled the chairs and table, and displaced the furniture. Vasu's dress was all soiled with the mud on the donkey's legs and he was accidentally injured, too. Two servants rushed to help the master after seeing the donkey's antics. They took two strong sticks and drove the donkey out of the house, tied it in the backyard, and gave it a good thrashing.

The donkey became glum.

In the dark, he heard a cluck. It was the wise hen. "I told you, it does not pay to be envious. Let's not aspire to be someone else. Each of us has a role to play in life, and let us play it wisely."

The donkey nodded sadly. He had understood.

**Be content
with your
lot.**

There was one lone tree!

It was the year 2999. The date December 31. The next day would be a new millennium and a new year. The time was nearing 8 in the evening. London's night sky was lit with fireworks and there was great hustle and bustle in the city. Rocky sat near the window. He was immersed in his thoughts.

His mother noticed this and asked him, "What're you thinking about, Rocky?"

Rocky said, "Mom, I have been asked to draw the picture of a tree on the computer by my Arts teacher, but I don't know how a tree looks like. Mom, what's a tree?"

"Rocky, first you take your protein and vitamin tablets. Then I'll tell you."

Rocky agreed. He took both the tablets and went and sat near his mother. "Mom, now tell me about the tree."

His mother began to describe the characteristics of a tree.

"Son, your great grandfather had told me all this, but I myself have not seen a tree in my life. Even your great grandfather hadn't



**Karthik
Ramaswamy
Chennai**



**Ashish G.
Shetty
Mumbai**

seen one. But, there's a tree in the London Museum. Long ago, it had leaves, trunks, and stems. The leaves were green and the trunks were brown. Thousands of years ago, there were many varieties of trees in the world. Unfortunately, now there is only one tree



altogether, because of man's thoughtlessness. Actually, without trees, there would be no rain. But scientists have found out a new way to bring rain artificially. Without water, you know, man cannot live."

Rocky interrupted her. "Mom, I once read in an old book that long ago there were people called vegetarians and non-vegetarians. Who are they? I also read that the tree in the Museum cannot reproduce. Why?"

"Yes, dear, it's true. Vegetarians were those people who depended on plants for their food, and non-vegetarians were those people who depended on animals for their food. The tree in the Museum cannot reproduce because it is now very old and may die sooner or later."

Rocky was listening intently. His mother continued: "A single tree cannot reproduce by itself. It must have flowers and fruits, and birds to take the seeds from the fruits to other places and butterflies to carry the pollen in the flowers to other flowers. That's how plants were reproducing themselves."

"How interesting, Mom," remarked Rocky. "What more were trees doing?"

"When there was an abundance of trees, there was no soil erosion, and there were plenty of rains. Trees gave protection to birds and animals, and man could put trees to different

uses." His mother began listing out the benefits from trees.

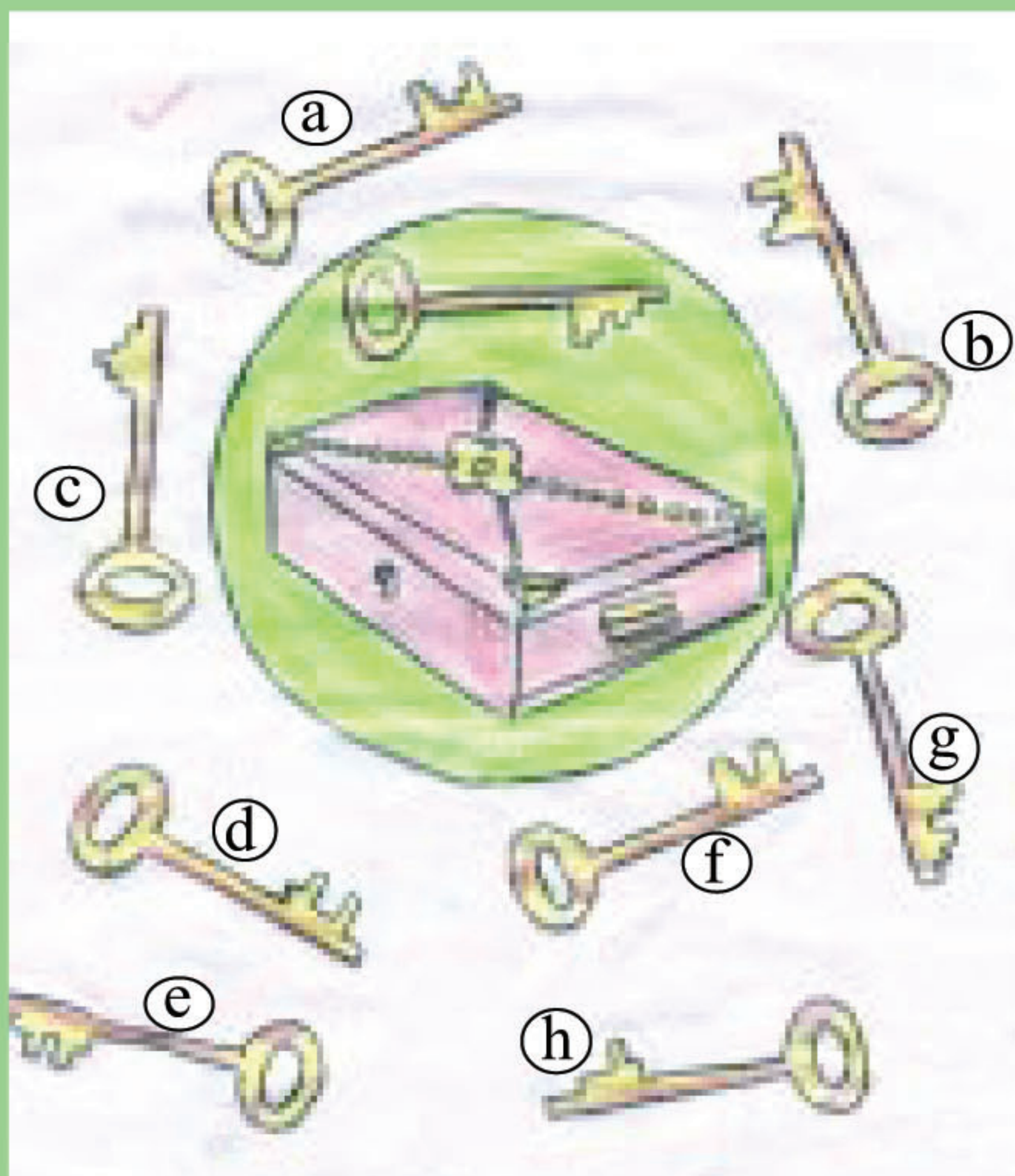
Rocky was now much excited. He said eagerly, "Mom, will you draw a tree for me in my laptop?"

"Yes dear, and here's a surprise for you. Tomorrow we shall go and see the tree in the London Museum. How do you like that?"

"Great Mom!" Rocky shouted.



Find the key



The key in the circle will open the box. Can you find a duplicate?

- A. Anitha Rani,
Thane.

Answer: 8

**Preserve
for
posterity**

Splash of colours



When we invited samples of drawings from children to select artists who could illustrate the stories for this special issue, we did not expect a flood – a flood of drawings, that is! The post brought loads and loads of paintings from children all over the country. Our office was a riot of colours: bright, sparkling, and wonderful. From these wonderful paintings, we had a difficult time zeroing in on the artists who would illustrate the stories. We invited five children from different parts of the country to Chennai. Unfortunately, two of them could not make it. But here we present the beautiful paintings that have helped us select the artists.

Here are the artists, clicked at our office and their drawing entries that got them selected!



ABHISHEK P.
from *Hyderabad*

his painting



ANJUL LUNIYA
from *Mumbai*

her entry





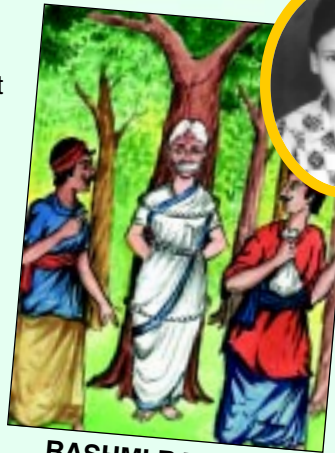
ASHISH SHETTY
from *Mumbai*

his drawing



PRITAM DAS
from *North 24-Parganas*

(They could not
make it to
Chennai.)



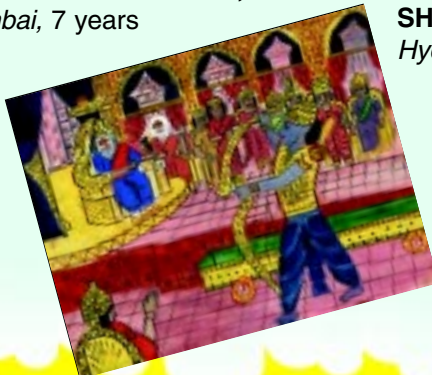
**RASHMI RANJAN
DEBATA**
from *Cuttack*

SPECIAL DISPLAY

We would like to make special mention
of the two youngest artists who entered
the contest.



S.V.S. BHEEMESHWAR,
Mumbai, 7 years



SHRUTHI CHOUDHRY,
Hyderabad, 10 years

**Well done,
friends!**

The evil perish by their deed



**Madhukar
Shetty
Mangalore**

There once lived two doves in a nest on a huge tree. They lived a quiet and peaceful life and were very happy together. In a hollow at the base of the tree lived a snake. The snake somehow could not tolerate the sight of the two happy doves.

It wanted to destroy their happiness and was always looking out for the right opportunity to do so.

One day, the female dove laid two eggs. When the doves went out to look for food, the snake slithered up the tree and pushed the eggs out. It

then went back to its hole silently and stayed there.

Sometime later, the two doves flew back home. Seeing the nest empty, the female dove was very upset. She started sobbing. Then she saw the snake that had come out of the hollow and she asked: "O my friend, I'm ruined. My eggs have been destroyed. You have been here all day. Did you see or hear any strange creature prowling around? What could have happened to my eggs?"

The snake was happy to see them in tears. He was also relieved that they did not suspect him of any foul play. So, he decided to cast the blame on someone before the doves could suspect that he himself was the culprit. He said: "I saw our neighbour, the kite, coming out of your nest some time back. He had your eggs in his beak. When he saw me, he said he hated you so much that he wanted to smash your eggs. I tried to stop him, but alas! What could I do? He is stronger





than I and he was adamant. He dropped the eggs down. I'm sorry, sister."

Now the snake did not realise that the kite was present on the tree and was listening to the snake's false accusation. Furious, he swooped down from his perch in a flash, picked up the nasty snake, and threw him far

away with so much force that the snake was killed. The kite then explained to the doves that he had nothing to do with the smashing of their eggs and that the snake was not only a liar, but also a mean, nasty creature and it could well have pushed down their eggs out of spite.

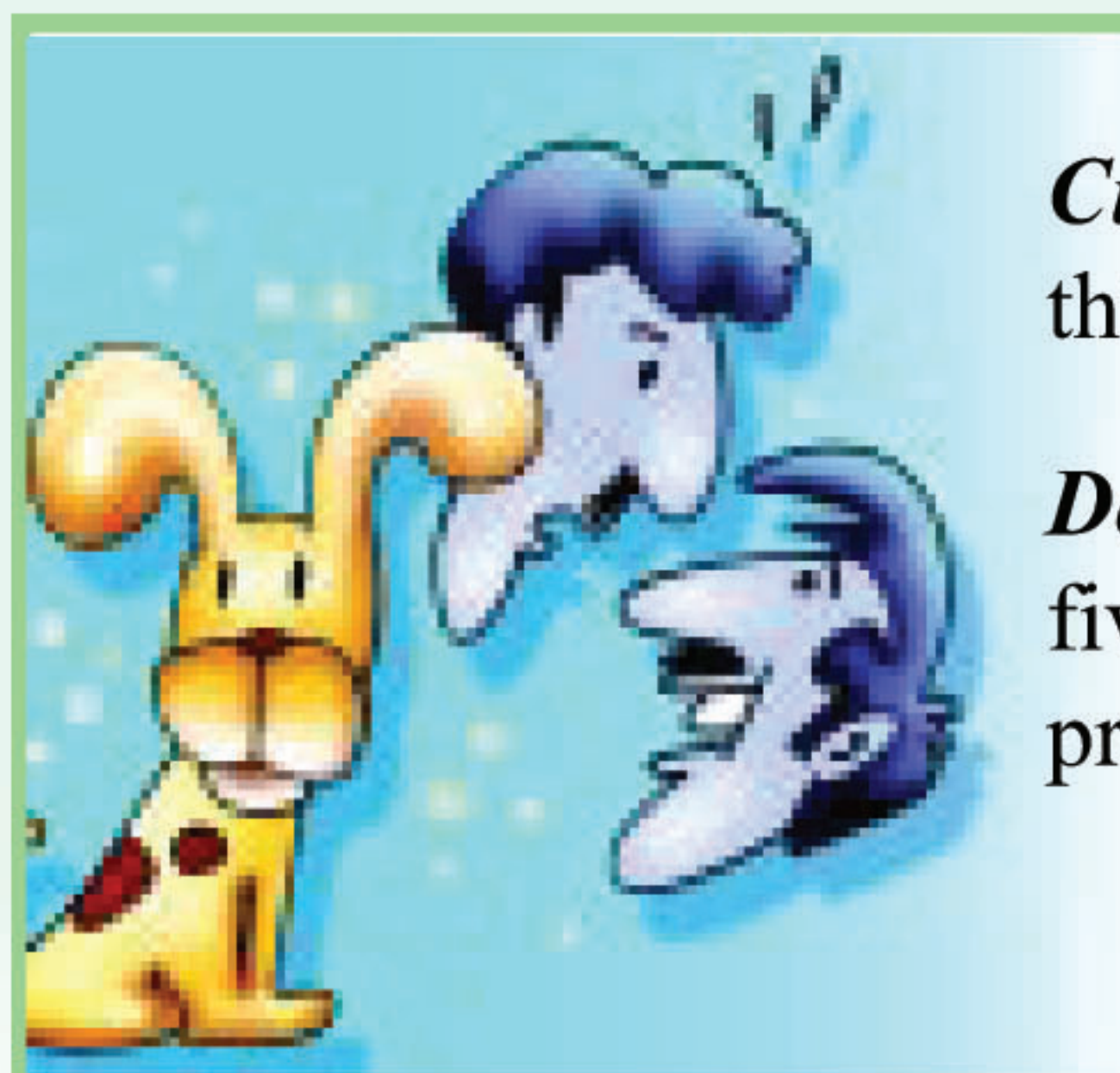
The doves could see that the kite was telling the truth. They slowly got over their grief. Soon the female dove laid more eggs from which hatched cute little birds. They all lived happily ever after. They thanked God for saving them from evil-minded neighbours like the snake.



The three teachers

Three teachers were walking on a road. Someone stole a purse from a woman walking nearby. The Kannada teacher began to shout "kalla, kalla". The Hindi teacher began to shout, "chor, chor". The Maths teacher thought for a while and began to shout, "420, 420!"

- M.C. Nikhilesh, Bangalore.



Customer: Are you sure that this dog is loyal?

Dog-seller: Oh, sure. I sold him five times and he came back promptly.

- Prashant Pandey, Mumbai.

**What you
sow, you
reap**

The magic flute



Sarthak Sobhan
Satpathy
Cuttack

Once there was a poor teenaged boy called Suman. He had nobody in the world, except his old grandmother. As she was too old to work, they often went without food for days together. Whenever her health was fine, she went to the forest to get firewood, sell it and bring in some money. Then

she would become ill for days at a stretch. Suman was very young to go for any work. This made him feel helpless and sad. He wanted to help his grandmother and end their misery.

One day, as he sat under a tree in the forest, he cried himself to sleep. A beautiful fairy awakened him. She said: "I've been watching you for the past few days. You look very gloomy. God has sent me here to find out why you are crying."

Suman was surprised to find a beautiful fairy wake him up. He immediately poured out all his troubles to her. He explained his need to have some money to help his grandmother.

The fairy was moved by Suman's earnestness. She gave him a magic flute. She explained to him: "When you play the flute in the presence of wrongdoers, they'll turn into stone. If you play it a second time, the stones will turn back into men and women."

She also warned him: "If you use the flute to do justice, it will stand you in good stead, but if you try to misuse it, it won't work." And then she disappeared.

Suman was very happy. He wanted to do well in the





world. As he went to the forest with the magic flute, he heard the thud of many horses galloping furiously. He hid himself and peeped out. He saw a band of dacoits, who had with them a beautiful young woman.

Suman knew she was the princess of that kingdom. He guessed that she had been kidnapped by them. He then decided to save her. He played the magic flute. And lo and behold, the dacoits turned into stone figures. He requested the princess to return to the palace and send some soldiers. She mounted one of the horses and rode back to the palace and informed the king about it. He sent soldiers back with her. Suman played the flute, and the stone figures came back to life. The dacoits were arrested and put in gaol. The princess invited Suman to the palace.

She introduced him to the king and

told him how helpful he and his magic flute had been.

The princess's words impressed the king. He felt that such a boy with a strong sense of justice and a tool like a magic flute would be invaluable in administering the kingdom. But he wanted to test him. He said, "Someone is stealing jewels and money from my treasury, but I'm not able to find out who it is. It'll be very helpful if you find out who the thief is."

That night, both the king and Suman hid near the treasury. They were surprised to see the treasurer and the army chief come with big bags and fill them with jewels from the treasury.

Suman acted fast. He took his flute out and started playing it. The two men turned into stone. The king called for the palace guards and then requested Suman to play on the flute again. The two culprits came alive and were immediately arrested. The king was very happy with Suman. He adopted him and brought him up and trained him in all state matters. When the princess was married and became the queen of the land, Suman became her prime minister and helped her rule wisely.



**Do good;
earn
goodwill.**

Friendship



Sabina Yesmin
North 24
Parganas

On the outskirts of the beautiful city of Kolkata was a small village, where Jaffar lived with his mother Lajjo Begum, and younger sister Neelima. Young himself, Jaffar had the mien of one who had learnt to shoulder responsibility well. Wasn't he the one who was supporting the family after his father died five years ago?

One morning, Jaffar got ready to go for work in the house of a well-to-do gentleman, Ramapatibabu, in the nearby town. 'I was really lucky to get this job,' mused Jaffar, tapping the flower seed packets he had just bought at the bazaar. 'If I had not learnt gardening from Khan *chacha*, Ramapatibabu would not have employed me,' he thought.

Walking briskly, he thought of

Ramapatibabu and his wife, Mousumi. He was lucky that they were both kind-hearted people.

Ramapatibabu was waiting for him. "Good morning babumoshai," Jaffar said cheerfully. "Our garden is going to look beautiful, isn't it?"

It was then that he saw the young boy standing next to Ramapatibabu. "Jaffar, this is my son Arjun. He has just come home from his school in the city. He will be here for a few weeks. You can call him chotababu. And this is Jaffar."

The two boys looked at each other for a few moments, before Ramapatibabu said, "Arjun, go inside and read that book I gave you this morning. I'll join you in a moment."

Turning to Jaffar, he gave some



instructions regarding the garden.

“Baba,” Arjun interrupted his father, “I would like to talk to Jaffar. I’m sure he could use my help...”

But Ramapatibabu cut him in mid-sentence, “Arjun, do as I say. Go inside!” The boy reluctantly obeyed. Jaffar remained silent and just listened to the instructions being given to him. All the excitement had gone out of him.

Jaffar worked hard the whole day, while his thoughts ran ahead of him. ‘Arjun looks just about my age...wonder what kind of a boy he is. I wish I could talk to him, though I know it is not possible for us to be friends.’ Young Jaffar knew that a huge chasm separated him from Ramapatibabu’s family – he was poor and they were rich. He was the servant, and they were the masters.

That evening, when he was getting ready to leave, Jaffar was very surprised to see Arjun coming towards him, smiling. “Jaffar, I’m sorry I couldn’t speak with you in the morning. I came to ask you something. Will you be my friend?” he asked, extending his hand.

A surprised Jaffar did not know what to say. Taking his silence for consent, Arjun took his hand excitedly and said, “Oh! I’m so glad, Jaffar. I’ve been longing for a friend so much. I’ve no real friends in the school hostel.”

Thus began an enviable friendship between the two boys. They found


many common interests and ideas. After a few weeks, however, Mousumi started looking at the growing friendship between her son and the servant with alarm. Arjun did not want to play with the children of Ramapatibabu’s friends. He only wanted to be with Jaffar. She expressed her



displeasure to Arjun one day. But he merely replied, “Ma, he is a nice boy – you said so yourself! I really like him a lot!”

Then one day, Arjun wished to visit Jaffar’s village and meet his mother and sister. Lajjo and Neelima liked Arjun’s friendly behaviour. He enjoyed the food they served him. They had a lot of fun the whole day through. “It’s getting late, Arjun. I think we

**Friendship
knows no
barriers**



should be going back,” said Jaffar. He had an uneasy feeling that Ramapatibabu would be angry with him for taking Arjun to the village. He also remembered that they had not taken permission from Arjun’s parents before they had impulsively set out.

Jaffar’s thoughts proved true. Ramapatibabu and Mousumi were alternating between worry and anger, when they saw the two hurrying back. Seeing that Arjun was safe, Ramapatibabu turned his rage on Jaffar. “Where have you been? How dare you take my son out without telling me? Just what do you think of yourself? Get out and don’t come back again!” he thundered furiously.

For a moment there was stunned silence. Then Arjun broke in. “Baba, it was not Jaffar’s fault...I had wanted to see his village. And I had such fun there. Please baba, don’t be angry! Don’t send him away! Jaffar!”



Arjun’s words went unheeded as Ramapatibabu pushed Jaffar roughly out of the house. Arjun started crying hysterically. Jaffar did not say a word even while his master continued shouting.

Suddenly Arjun fell down in a faint. Mousumi was so shocked that she let out a yell. Ramapatibabu rushed inside and seeing his son unconscious he said urgently, “Mousumi, call Dr. Chatterjee immediately.”



Rohit: Ravi, do you know who is the strongest man?

Ravi: The traffic policeman. He can stop all the cars with one hand.

- Vijendra Singh, Kota.

The doctor came and was surprised to see Arjun running a high temperature. He gave him an injection. The next day, the fever returned and Arjun was also mumbling incoherently. “Ramapatibabu, what happened? Arjun seems to be in some kind of shock,” he said, just as they heard him cry out, “Baba, don’t send Jaffar away!” Arjun continued muttering while his parents and the doctor watched helplessly.

Dr. Chatterjee took Ramapatibabu aside. “It’s obvious that he’s in a state of shock. Whoever this Jaffar is, get him here immediately.” Ramapatibabu realised his mistake.

Telling his wife that he would be back soon, he started towards Jaffar’s village. Rushing towards Jaffar, Ramapatibabu exclaimed, “I’m sorry, Jaffar. I was so angry that I did not realise what I was saying. Please come immediately. Arjun needs you.” He quickly explained all that had taken place and urged them all to come to his house.

Jaffar stood beside Arjun’s bed. “Arjun, see I’m Jaffar. Open your eyes, *bandhu*. Arjun!” he said gently.

Hearing the familiar voice, the boy stirred and tried to open his eyes. Jaffar called again and then Arjun was awake. He smiled at Jaffar and got up slowly. Ramapatibabu, Mousumi, Lajjo and Neelima, all looked on as

the two friends clasped each other’s hands.

Things changed dramatically after this incident. Ramapatibabu insisted on Jaffar’s family living in one of his out-houses. Jaffar and Neelima were admitted to the

Number Game

Find the numbers hidden in this little duck.



Eleven
Nine
Eight
Seven
Six
Five
Four
Three
Two
One

Answer:

- A. Anitha Rani, Thane.

town school along with Arjun. There was joy and laughter in the house and no chasms could separate the two fast friends, Arjun and Jaffar.

**Friendship
knows no
barriers**

The mountain of no return

Once in Japan, a law was passed that all old people who had reached the age of seventy had to be taken to a mountain and abandoned there. It was believed that all old people lost their senses, faculties, and physical strength. They thus became a burden to their families and to society.

There lived two brothers, Ichiro and Chiro. They worked hard all day in their fields. In the evening, they were welcomed home with a smile by their old mother, Sumi. But lately Ichiro and Chiro had grown sad and gone silent, and they often stood at the window staring at the mountain far away, which was covered with mist. They often thought, the law had forgotten that the

elders could pass on to their children the wisdom and experience they had gathered over the years.

One evening, Sumi told her sons: "My sons, I'm 70 years old today. So, in accordance with the law of this land, you must take me to the mountain of no return." The mountain was so called because all those old people who went there never came back.

The sons' faces went pale and they burst into tears. But Sumi consoled them saying, none could go against the law. The next morning Sumi packed up her clothes and cooked her last meal. Everything was ready, and the journey began.

It was a long one, but at last they reached the foot of the mountain. As they climbed, every few moments, Sumi would break the tops of the dry reeds that grew along the path. She would not be coming that way again, but she should leave a route which her sons could recognise. Soon they were on the summit and they bade good-bye to their loving mother and turned



Pooja Choubey
Visakhapatnam



Anjul Luniya
Mumbai



quickly and left with a heavy heart.

It had become dark and begun to snow. The brothers were running down quickly. Suddenly, the snowflakes thickened; it turned up to a raging blizzard. And the brothers lost their way. In desperation, the brothers started calling out for their mother. Sumi heard her sons' call. She guided them down the mountain by the route along which she had broken the reeds, and they easily reached home.

And the brothers decided not to let her go back to the mountain. So they hid her at the back of their hut. Blissfully happy now, the three lived on.

One day, the great lord of the land summoned the male members of all families to perform certain tasks for him. If they failed to do them, they would be fined. So the lord asked them to perform the tasks. "First, bring me a rope of ashes." This bewildered all the men.

Ichiro and Chiro took this strange task to Sumi, who only laughed and said, "That's easy. Sprinkle salt water heavily on a rope; lay it on a metal sheet and set it on fire. The rope will turn to loose ash, but the salt will keep them together."

Except for the two brothers, none else could complete the task and they had to pay fines imposed by the lord.

The second task was to bring a conch shell with a thread passing through it. Sumi had an idea for that, too. She said, "First catch an ant; fasten it lightly to a thread, and let it enter from the hole at the top. Then, place some grains of rice at the mouth of the



conch. Attracted by the rice, the ant will thread its way through the conch, taking the thread with it." The lord was pleased when the brothers took a conch with a thread running through it.

The third task was to bring a drum that would sound without being beaten. The brothers went home and Sumi had an answer for this, too. She told them: "Take a jar which is open on both sides. Attach circular leather pieces to both ends, but before sealing it, release some bees inside and when the lord would pick it up, the bees now being disturbed would begin to fly hitting the sides and producing a sound."

The lord was very much pleased with Ichiro and Chiro for performing all the three tasks. However, they confessed that they did not deserve any reward, but their mother who lived in the hut. They revealed that she was past 70 years but they did not let her go and thus, they had broken the law.

But the lord not only pardoned them, but repealed the law, and even returned the fines paid by the villagers. He honoured Sumi by making her his adviser.



**Respect
the aged
for their
wisdom**

Know Your India

Quiz

Can we, after Shakespeare ("*Beware the Ides of March*" - Julius Caesar), say "Remember the Ides of November"? For, November 14 is Children's Day in India. And throughout that one month, children make their presence felt in one way or another. Indian mythology abounds in stories of children whom we often remember. Can you identify the children in the incidents narrated below?

1. A prince succeeded his father after the king went into the forest, and ruled the kingdom for 36,000 years. Later, he went over to a *loka* (world) where he is believed to be still living. Who was the prince? Who was his father?
2. A sage, yearning for a son, was asked whether he would like to have a dull-witted child who would live long or one who was virtuous but would be short-lived. The sage chose the latter. Name the son who was born to him. What was the sage's name?
3. An Asura ruler found his son defying him. So, he decided to put him to death. Whatever method was used did not affect him. He was saved by the Lord whom he worshipped. Who was that wonderful boy? Who was his saviour?
4. He was a 7-year-old boy. His father was performing a *yaga*, during which he was gifting cows to the priests. The boy found that the cows were old and infirm. "To whom are you giving me away?" he asked of his father, who replied: "To the god of Death." Yama appeared before the boy but taught him the secret of immortality. Who was the boy? What was his father's name?
5. Some princes were a-hunting. Their dog saw a dark-skinned boy in the forest and began barking at him ferociously. He sent arrows into its mouth to stop its barking. When asked by the princes who he was, he told them his guru's name, and he was their guru as well. Who was the boy? Who were the princes?
6. A king was surprised when he came upon a young boy trying to count the teeth of a tiger cub. He was more surprised when he was told that the boy was his own son. Who was the boy? Who was the king?

(Answers next month)

Answers to October quiz will also appear in the December issue

Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation –
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages

22. Believer and the Non-believer



“What on earth made you attend that group-meeting? I know some of them; they are very proud of their knowledge. But they know practically nothing,” Jayashree, Professor Devnath’s daughter-in-law, was heard telling Sandip, taking him to task for what he ought not to have done.

“But, mother, I never subscribed to their views! In fact, I opposed them and asserted that there has to be a creator behind the creation, just as there is an artist behind the painting hanging on their wall,” said Sandip.

Just then the professor entered the

drawing room and found out what caused the lively dispute between mother and son. A teacher at Sandip’s school was an atheist, one who did not believe in the existence of God, and periodically he called groups of his friends and students to his residence to discuss the philosophy of atheism.

“My dear Sandip, your argument that there must be a painter behind a painting reminds me of a dialogue between a scientist and his friend. The scientist was a believer in the existence of God; but his friend was not. They argued on the issue on several



occasions. One day, on entering the scientist's room, the atheist found on his table an elegant model of the solar system made of some glittering metal.

"This is beautiful; who made this?" he asked.

"Nobody. It made itself," replied the scientist.

"You're kidding. Tell me who made it so that I could order one for me."

"My friend, if you believe that the original solar system, that grand and sublime phenomenon, could come into being without a maker, why don't you believe that a tiny model of it could do the same?" retorted the scientist. And of course, their dialogue ended there.

"In the first place, I cannot understand how there could be people

who did not believe in the existence of God. What do they live by?" Jayashree posed the question, with some anguish.

"My daughter, do you believe that all those who swear by God do really have a faith in Him? They subscribe to a habit, often a superstition. They live by their ignorance just as the atheists live by their ignorance. Any so-called believer in God is not necessarily superior to an atheist either in wisdom or in intelligence or in conscience," observed Grandpa, to the amusement of his listeners, Jayashree and her children Sandip and Chameli.

"But isn't it a fact that India's hoary past presents us a great tradition of faith in God?" queried Jayashree.

"Indeed, it is so. Ours is a tradition of search: for the meaning of life and for Truth. But our tradition did not allow any single dogmatic concept to drive out all other concepts. In fact, India is the land on which the first great atheistic concept gained ground and flourished to a certain degree. That was propagated by a legendary savant called Charvaka. He founded a school of thought. The followers were known as Charvakas. There were several other great atheistic or materialistic philosophers such as Brihaspati."

"Brihaspati, Grandpa? Isn't he the priest of the gods?" asked Chameli, somewhat surprised.

"The Brihaspati I'm referring to

was different, a human scholar. Next to Charvaka, the one who is remembered is Goshala, who revived the school of the Ajeevikas, an ancient school of non-believers. His was a rather tragic case.”

“Why tragic, Father?” asked Jayashree.

The professor narrated the story:

Goshala was a contemporary of Mahavira Jeena, the great exponent of Jainism. Mahavira and Goshala were good friends, to begin with. However, according to legends, Goshala was extremely envious of Mahavira. One day, while they were passing through a forest, Mahavira casually drew his companion’s attention to a lush green creeper with a few buds.

“Look there, my friend, what is seen as buds now would have bloomed into flowers in a day or two! What a miracle

of Nature,” observed Mahavira.

“Are you sure of that?” challenged Goshala quite unnecessarily.

Mahavira was surprised by the tone of his companion. He had made a statement only lightly. But now he grew serious. He was a seer. He closed his eyes for a moment and then said, “Yes, I’m sure, these buds would bloom into beautiful flowers.”

Goshala displayed a mischievous smile, but said nothing more.

The hermitage in which the two travellers were to spend their night was not far. At midnight, while Mahavira lay asleep, Goshala tiptoed out of the cottage and walked back to the site where the creeper stood entwining a tree. He pulled out the creeper and threw it into a nearby ditch and then went back to the hermitage and slept.



Two days later, both Mahavira and Goshala happened to pass by the same way. Mahavira had probably forgotten their dialogue about the creeper. But a little before they reached the site, a laughing Goshala reminded him of it and announced, "I say, your buds could not have bloomed into flowers!"

"Do you think so?" asked Mahavira, a bit intrigued.

"It's not a question of my thinking so. I'm sure of it," asserted Goshala.

They had reached the site. Lo and behold, the creeper had taken root where it had been thrown and, after a night of rains, the buds had bloomed into beautiful flowers.

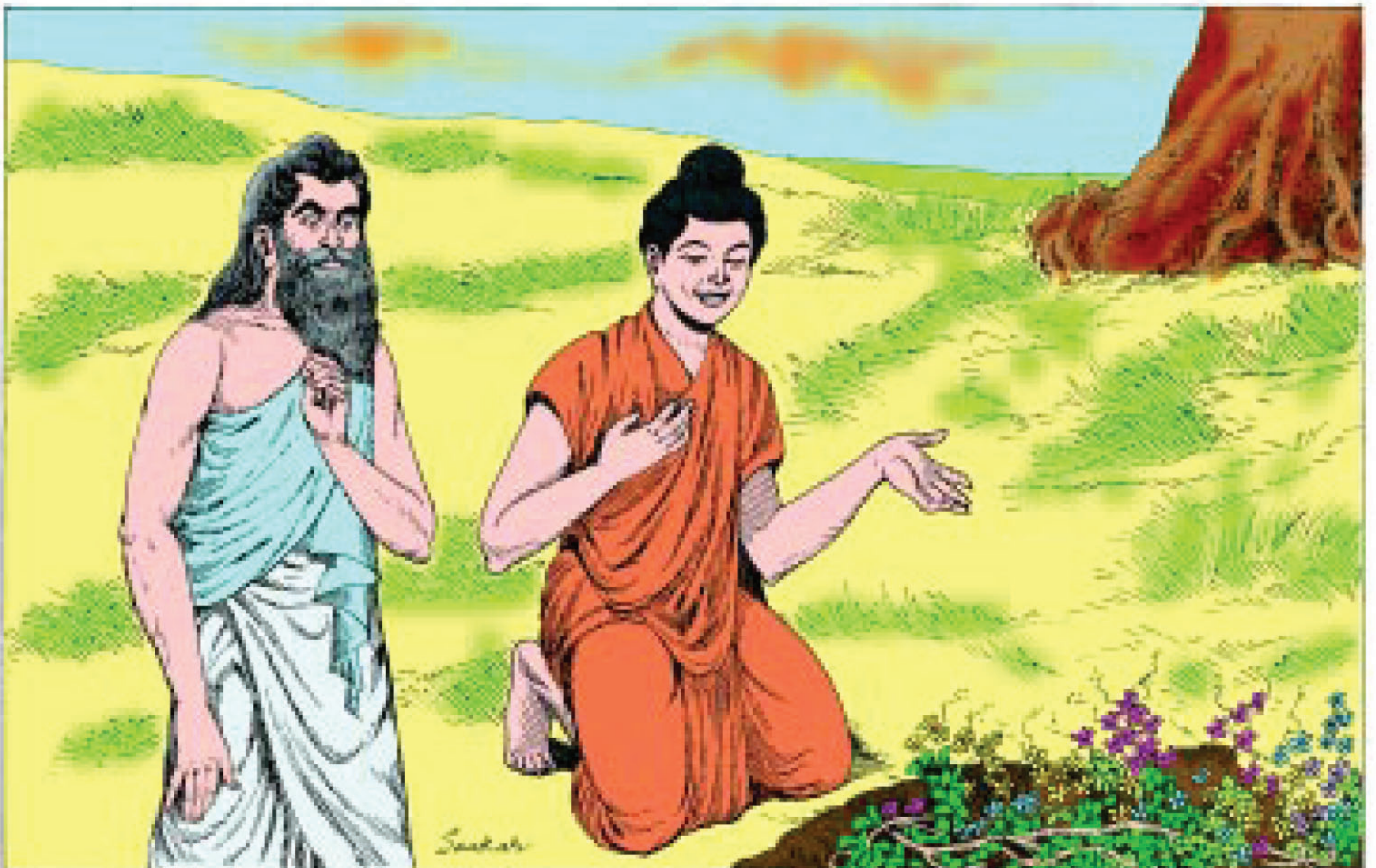
Mahavira quietly pointed at them but said nothing. However, Goshala felt terribly upset. He raved and ranted

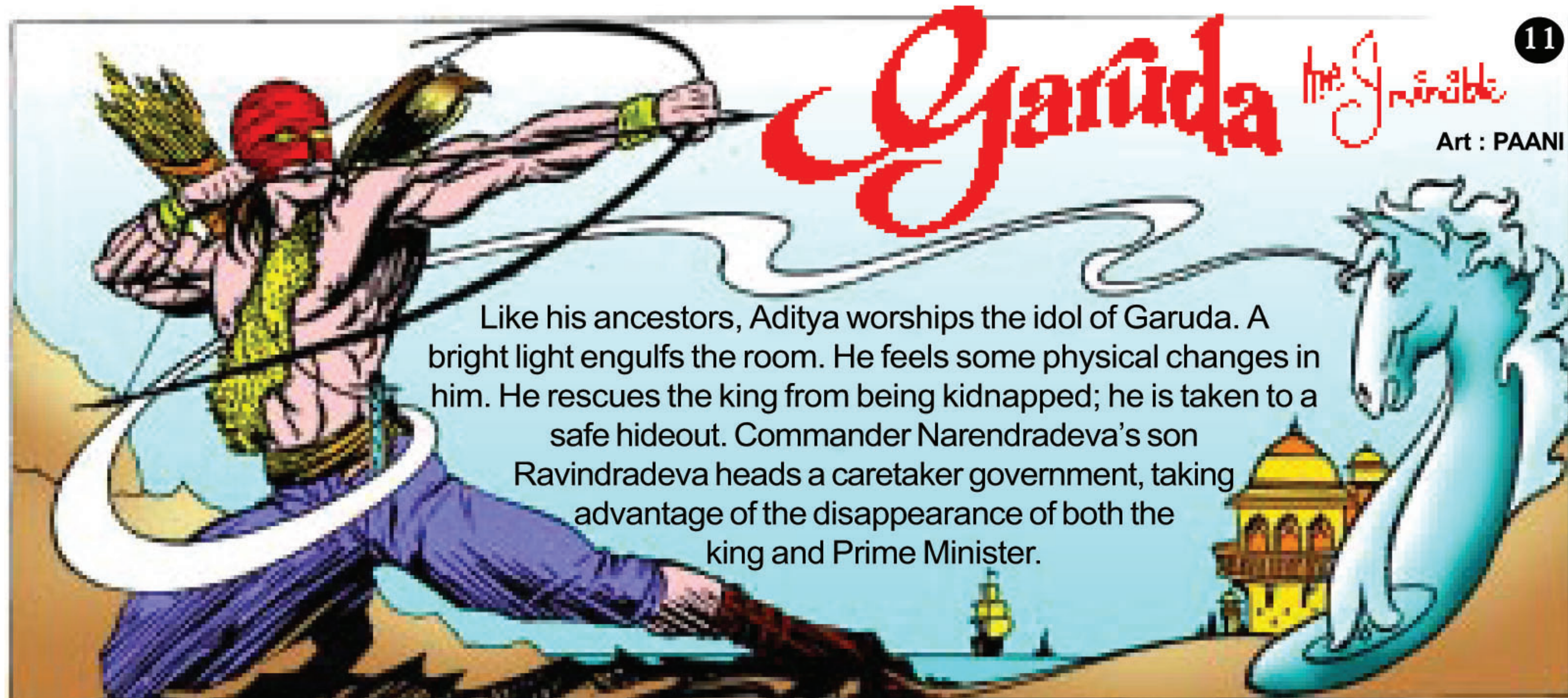
and threw nasty words at Mahavira. "If everything is being decided earlier, what's the use of our acting at all? What's the meaning of this life?" he demanded again and again and left Mahavira.

As days passed, he grew more and more hostile towards Mahavira. He devoted all his time to contradict everything Mahavira said. Once he even tried to kill Mahavira by taking recourse to some black magic. But as his prey was well protected by his own spiritual merit, the destructive force which Goshala had directed at him, bounced upon himself. Goshala fell ill. He became mad and died after a while.

"Alas, what a havoc can envy cause in one's own life!" the professor said in conclusion.

- Visvvasu



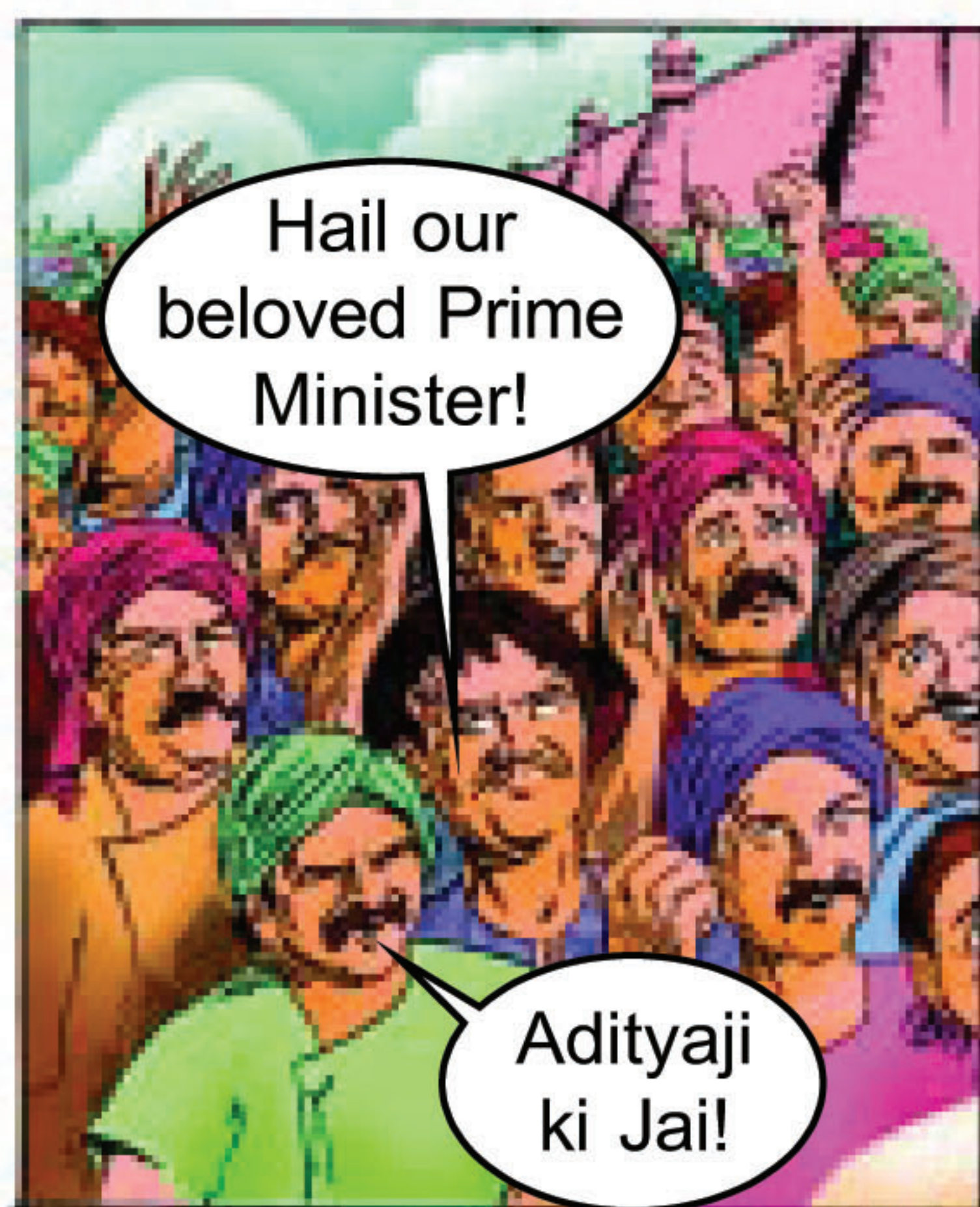
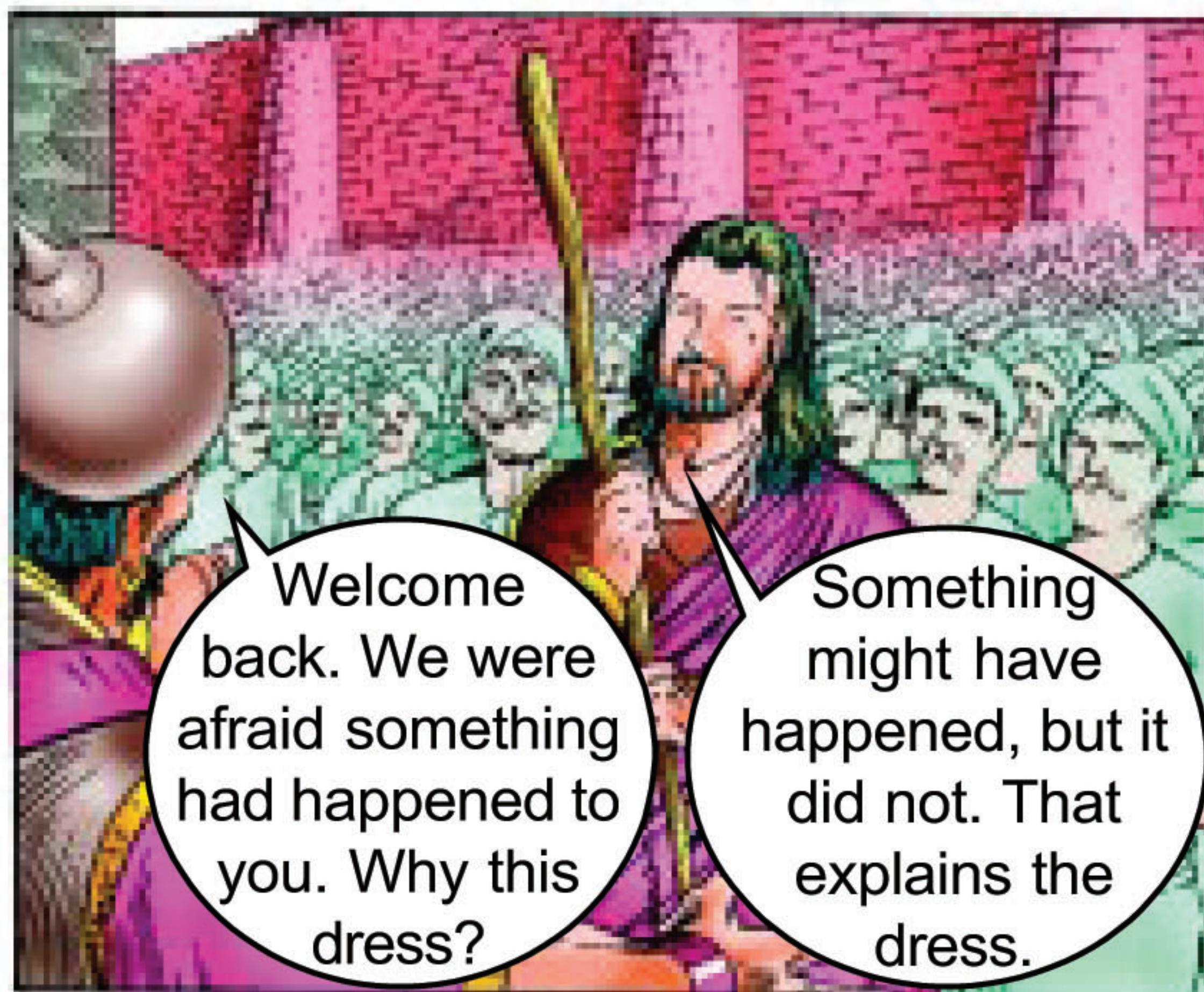


Narendradeva spots Aditya among the crowd.

Did he think nobody would recognise him?

Who, father? Aditya?

Who else? Let me go and receive him.



Ravindradeva is not at all happy.



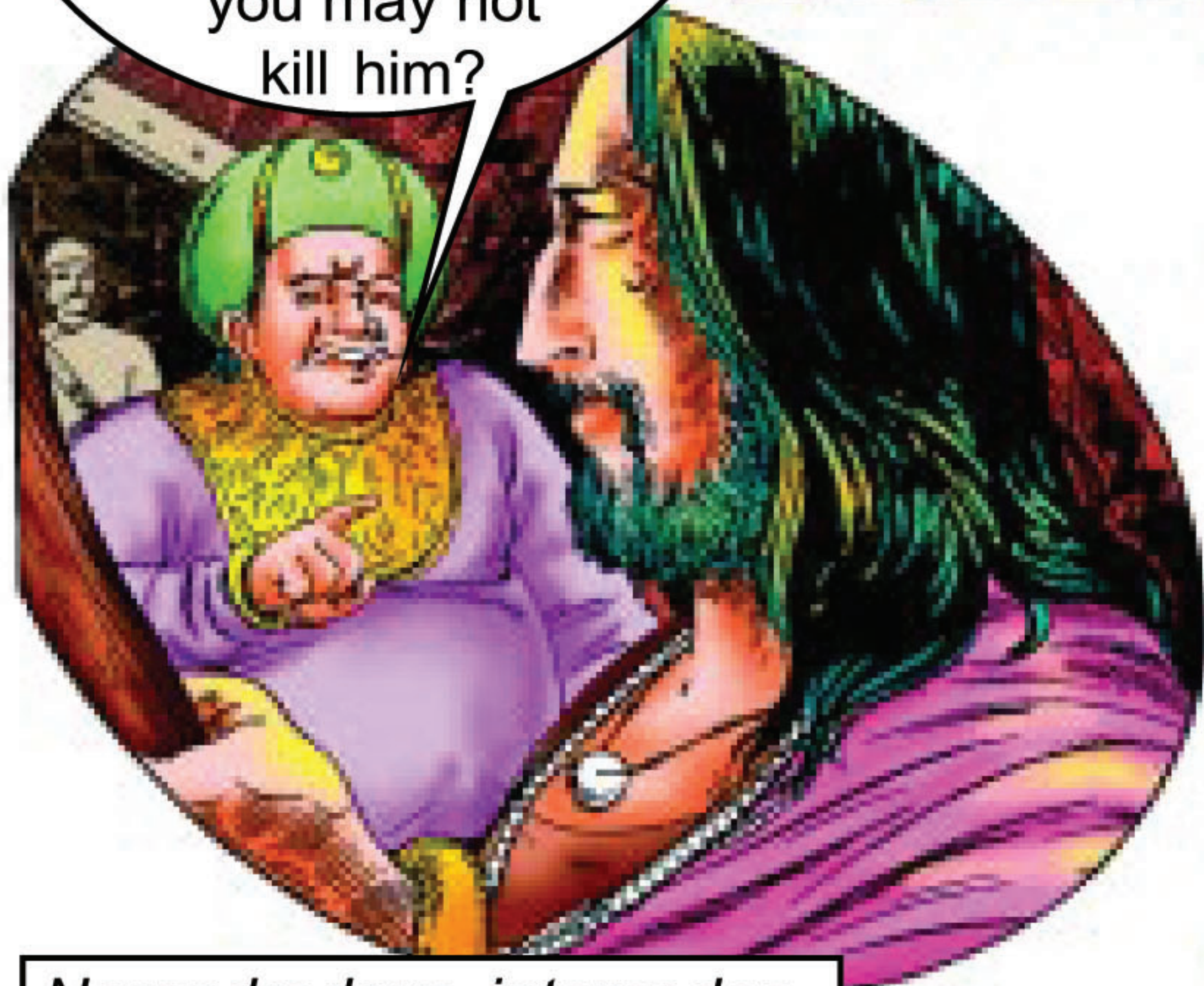


Without answering him, Aditya turns to face the crowd.

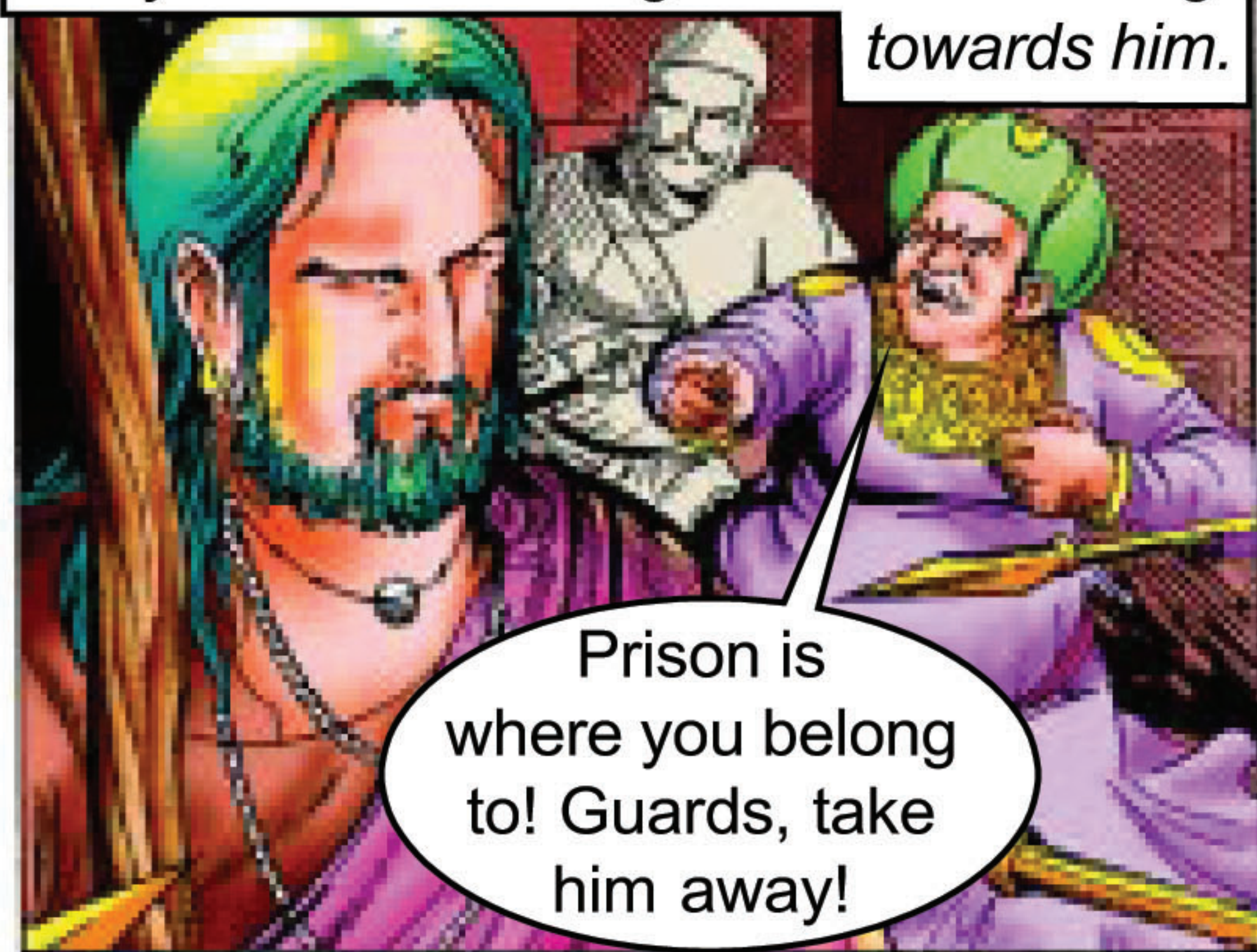
The king has been kidnapped! His life may be in danger!

Listen to me! Our king is safe! He had to leave the palace to avoid a crisis. He'll come back very soon! I can't tell you anything more. You must be patient!

You're a liar! You may like it or not, but I say, you and that Garuda have abducted the king. Who knows you may not kill him?



Aditya sees some guards advancing towards him.



Prison is where you belong to! Guards, take him away!

Narendradeva intercedes, much to the surprise of Ravindradeva.

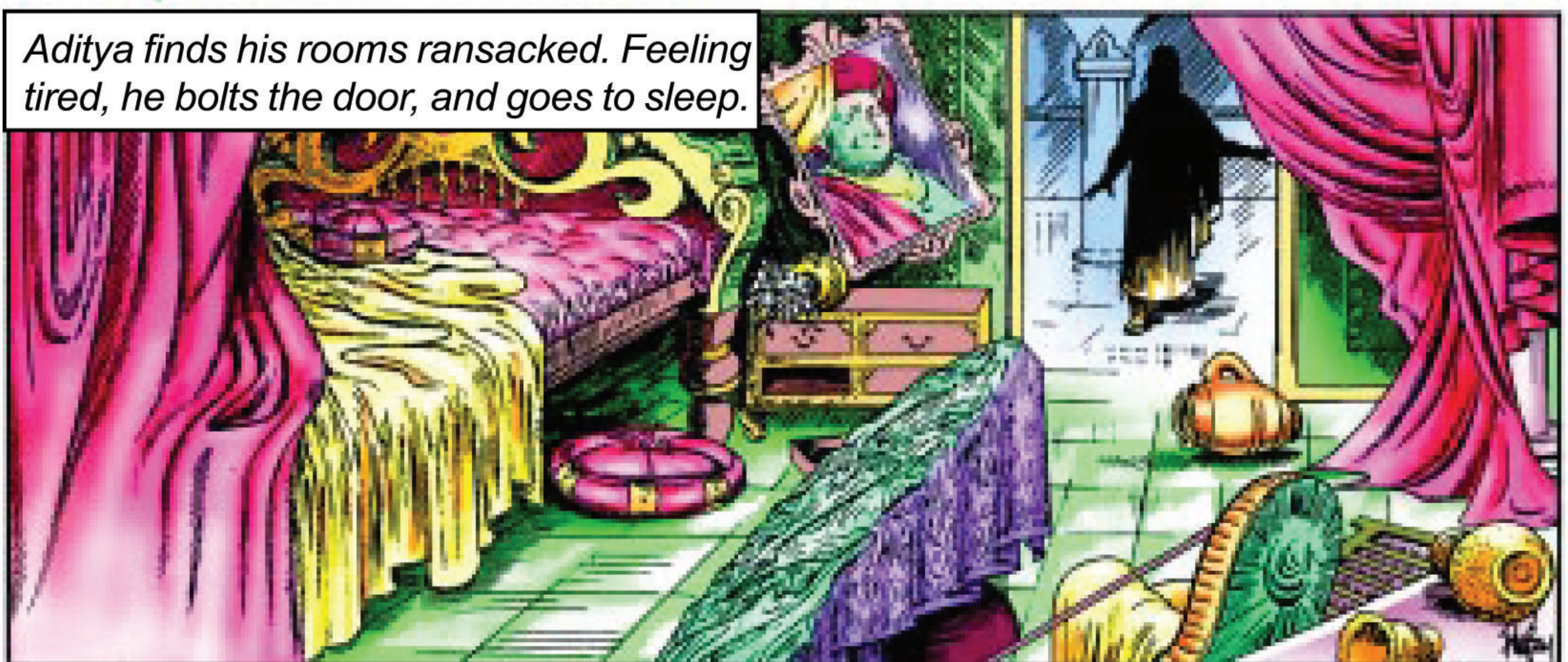
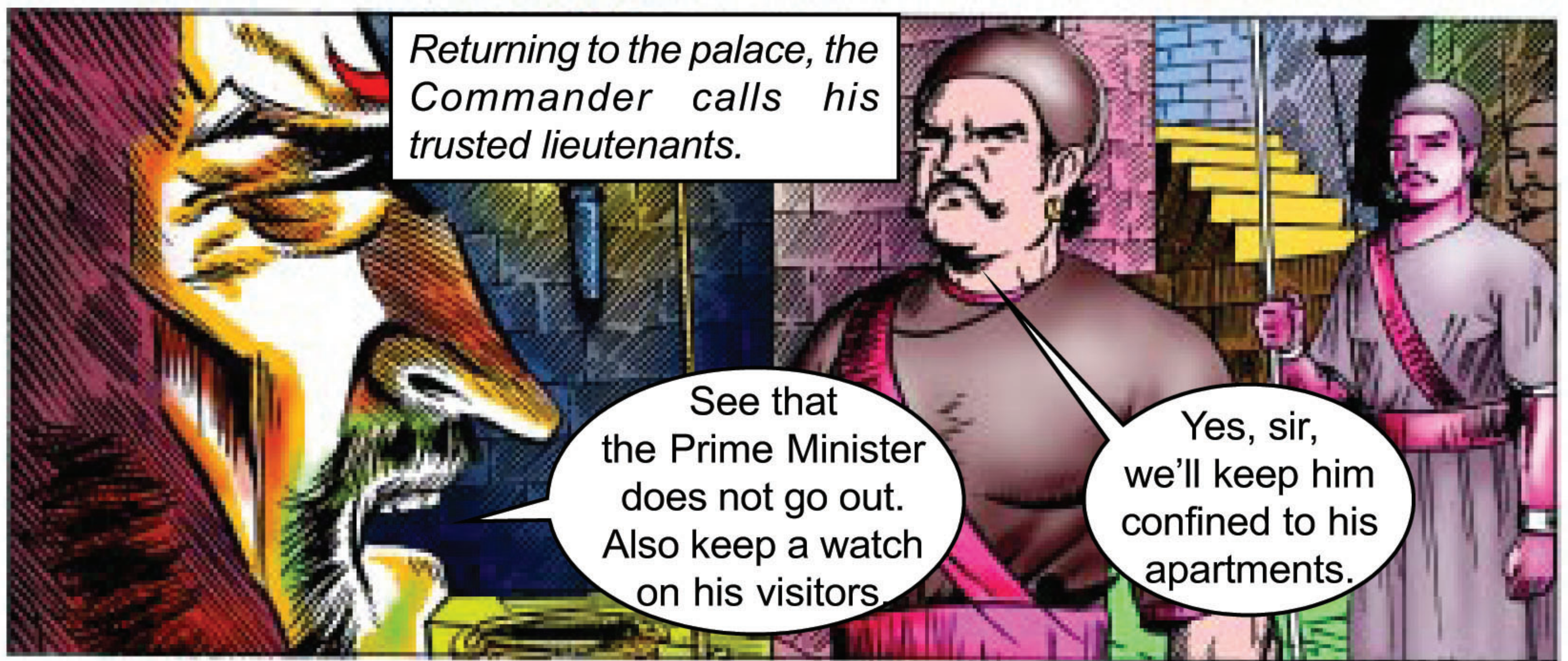


Aditya, you may return to your apartments. But, I'm really worried about the king.

Thank you. The king is quite safe, and he'll return to the capital soon.



They're up to some game. Otherwise, why was I freed so soon?



At the palace,
Narendradeva and
Ravindradeva intently
listen to an oracle.

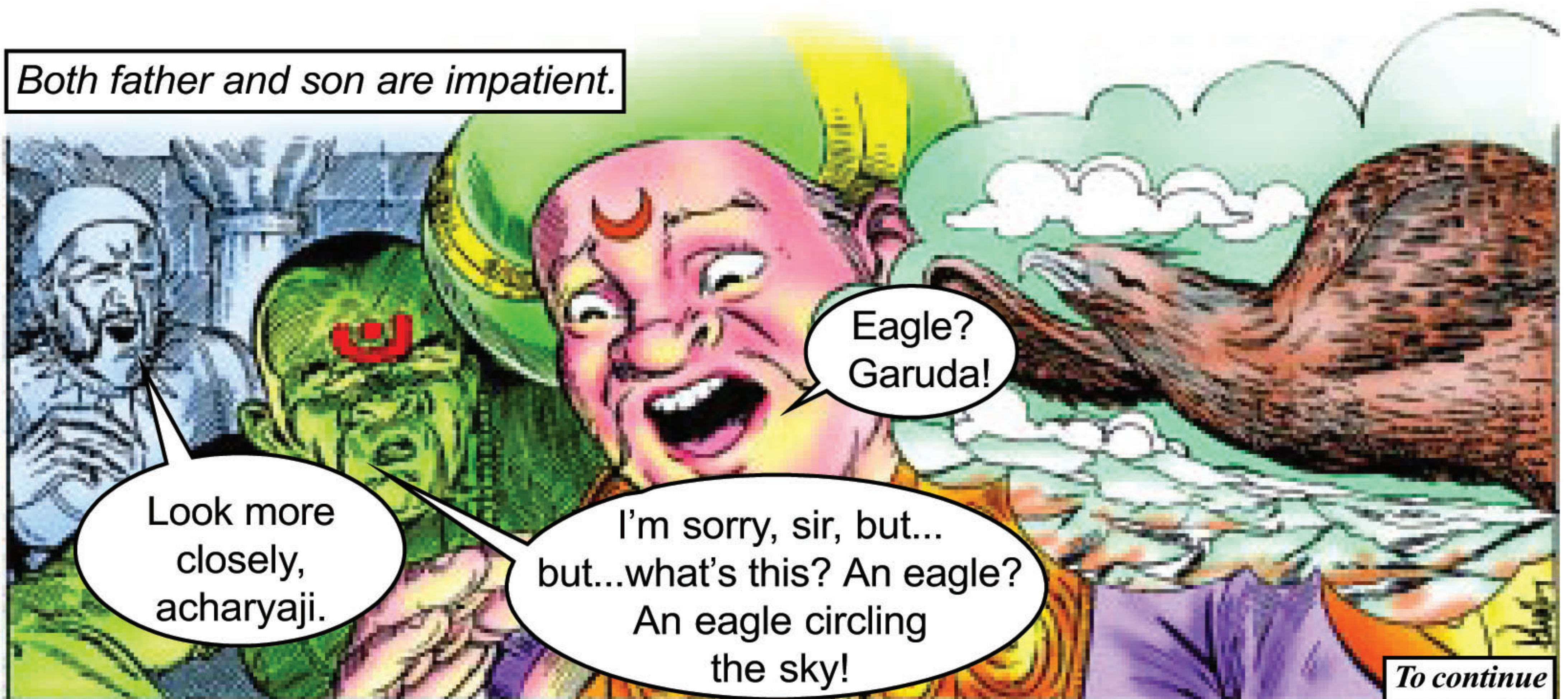


... a man and a woman.
Oh my! The place is
surrounded by all kinds of wild
animals! Is there a waterfall?
Nothing is clear!

Ah! I can now
see the king! He appears
quite hale and hearty. Two
persons are with him...



Both father and son are impatient.



Look more
closely,
acharyaji.

Eagle?
Garuda!

I'm sorry, sir, but...
but...what's this? An eagle?
An eagle circling
the sky!

To continue

A DOORLESS CABIN IN A CASTLE

Way back in 1793, Sir Walter Scott, the great Scottish writer, was spending a night in the Castle of Glamis. Alas, he could barely get a wink of sleep. He seemed to have experienced something most strange and bizarre. He wrote later: "I must own that when I heard door after door shut, after my conductor had retired, I began to consider myself as too far from living, and somewhat too near the dead." What made it such a frightful and sleepless night for him?

The Glamis Castle stands in a small village in Scotland. For centuries, the vast fortified building, with its tapering towers, had been the home of the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne. It is famous as the setting for one of the scenes of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Macbeth* and as the childhood home of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother of Great Britain.

But there is something most unusually mysterious about this castle which was built between 1675 and 1687. It had more than one hundred rooms spread out in a most disorderly manner. Those who have spent some time inside the castle have always felt their location just mysterious.

Several of those rooms have perhaps never been used by human beings. But they have not remained empty either. Then, who could have been the other users? Popular tales assert that they are none other than ghosts! The Castle of Glamis is one of the foremost among the haunted houses on earth.

Strangely, there is one room in the castle with a window but *without a door*. It is, in fact, this secret chamber hidden deep within the walls and its uncanny story that have made the Castle of Glamis one of the great mysteries. Only three persons at one time know of the enigma of this room and the secret



entrance leading into it. They are the Earl, his heir when he is no longer a boy, and the Keeper of the castle.

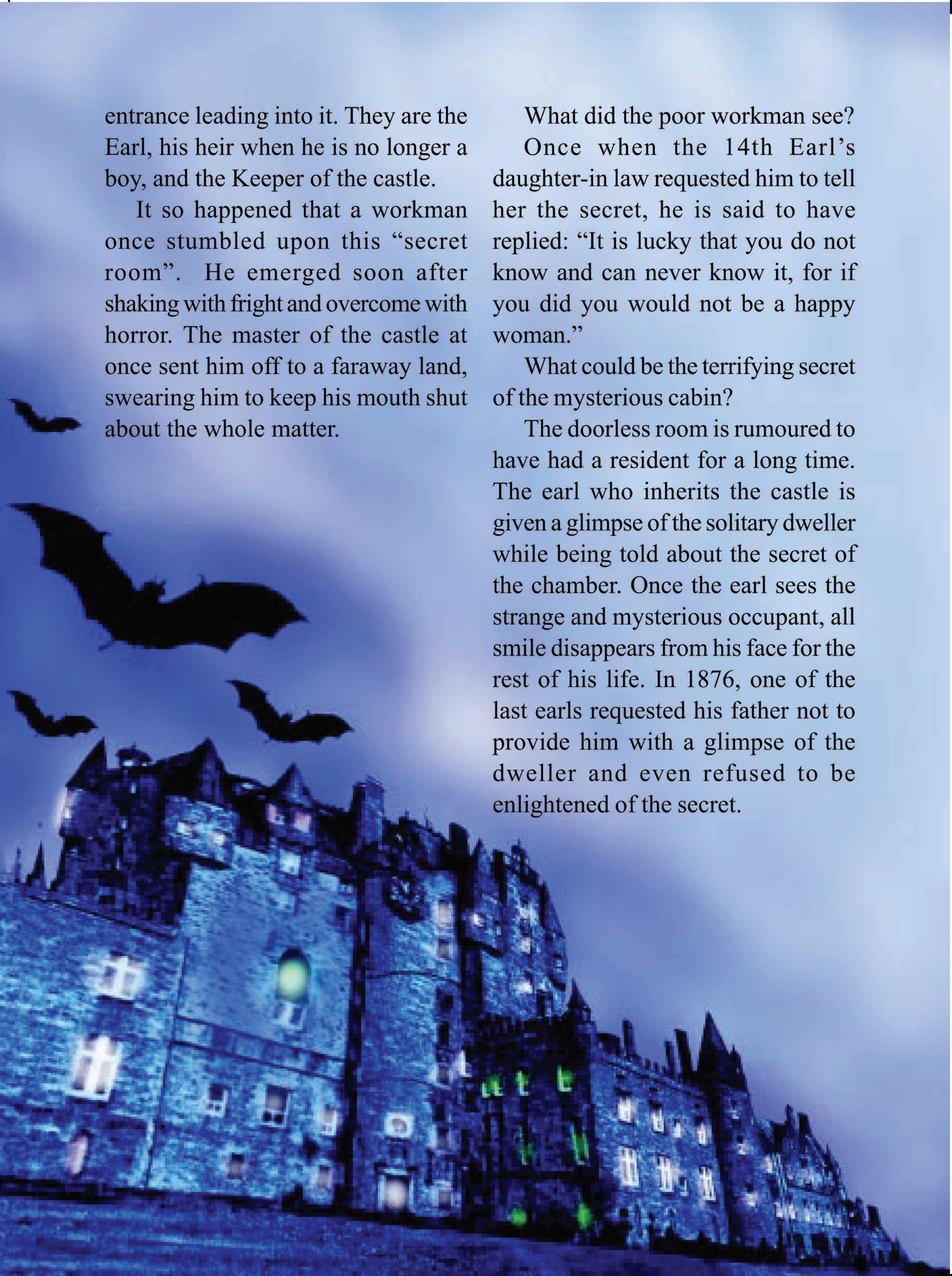
It so happened that a workman once stumbled upon this “secret room”. He emerged soon after shaking with fright and overcome with horror. The master of the castle at once sent him off to a faraway land, swearing him to keep his mouth shut about the whole matter.

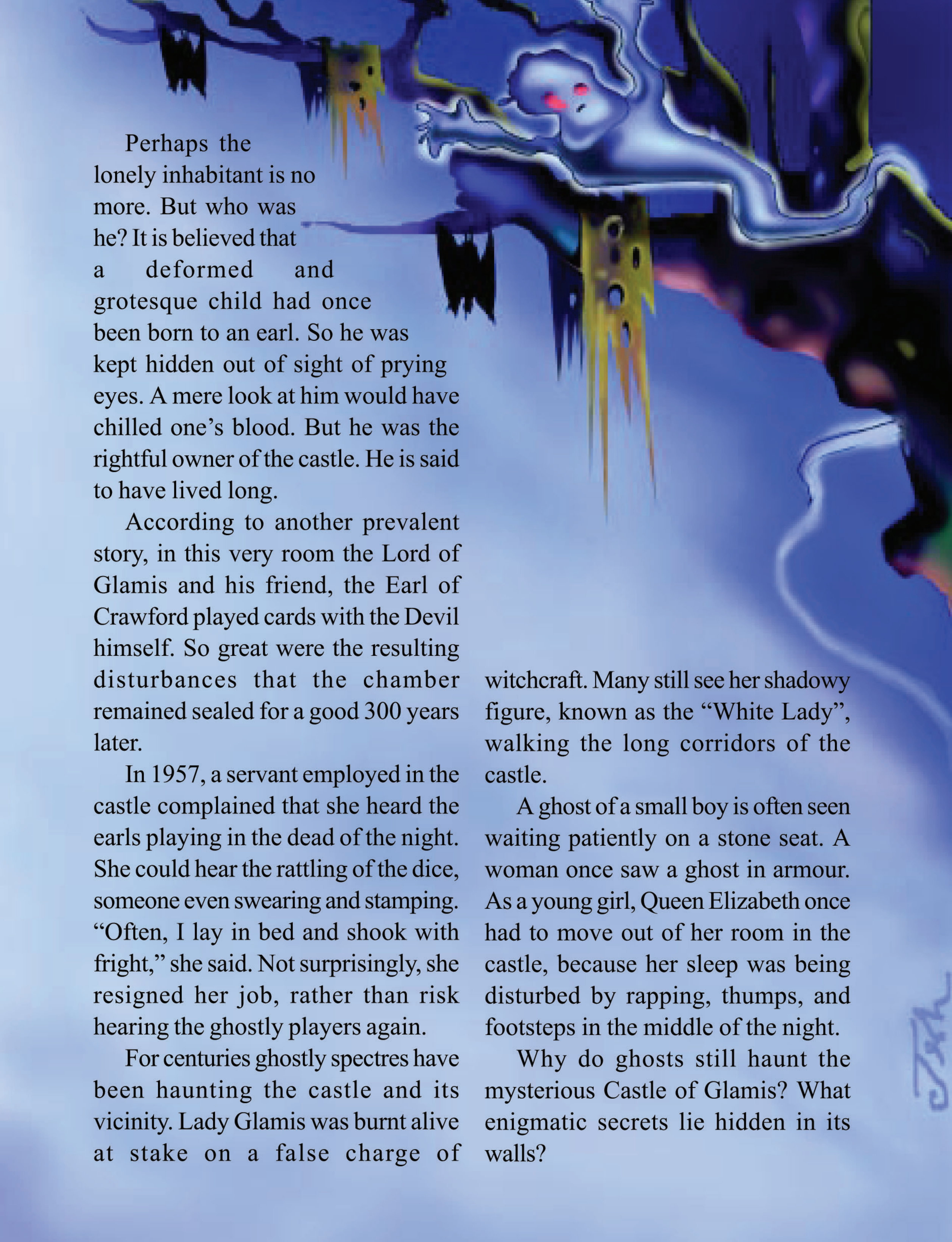
What did the poor workman see?

Once when the 14th Earl’s daughter-in law requested him to tell her the secret, he is said to have replied: “It is lucky that you do not know and can never know it, for if you did you would not be a happy woman.”

What could be the terrifying secret of the mysterious cabin?

The doorless room is rumoured to have had a resident for a long time. The earl who inherits the castle is given a glimpse of the solitary dweller while being told about the secret of the chamber. Once the earl sees the strange and mysterious occupant, all smile disappears from his face for the rest of his life. In 1876, one of the last earls requested his father not to provide him with a glimpse of the dweller and even refused to be enlightened of the secret.



A dark, atmospheric illustration of a castle at night. The castle is silhouetted against a deep blue sky, with some windows glowing. A ghostly figure with glowing red eyes and a pale, translucent body is seen floating in the sky above the castle. The overall mood is mysterious and eerie.

Perhaps the lonely inhabitant is no more. But who was he? It is believed that a deformed and grotesque child had once been born to an earl. So he was kept hidden out of sight of prying eyes. A mere look at him would have chilled one's blood. But he was the rightful owner of the castle. He is said to have lived long.

According to another prevalent story, in this very room the Lord of Glamis and his friend, the Earl of Crawford played cards with the Devil himself. So great were the resulting disturbances that the chamber remained sealed for a good 300 years later.

In 1957, a servant employed in the castle complained that she heard the earls playing in the dead of the night. She could hear the rattling of the dice, someone even swearing and stamping. "Often, I lay in bed and shook with fright," she said. Not surprisingly, she resigned her job, rather than risk hearing the ghostly players again.

For centuries ghostly spectres have been haunting the castle and its vicinity. Lady Glamis was burnt alive at stake on a false charge of

witchcraft. Many still see her shadowy figure, known as the "White Lady", walking the long corridors of the castle.

A ghost of a small boy is often seen waiting patiently on a stone seat. A woman once saw a ghost in armour. As a young girl, Queen Elizabeth once had to move out of her room in the castle, because her sleep was being disturbed by rapping, thumps, and footsteps in the middle of the night.

Why do ghosts still haunt the mysterious Castle of Glamis? What enigmatic secrets lie hidden in its walls?

Children in the news

Youngest champions



FIDE, the official body controlling all chess tournaments, has conferred the title of Grandmaster on 15-year-old Pendyala Harikrishna and of woman Grandmaster on 14-year-old Koneru Humpy. They are the youngest champions till now to win the titles, and the two achieved the coveted distinction within 48 hours in the closing days of August. Harikrishna annexed the

Commonwealth Chess title in London on August 27, while Humpy won the World Junior Girls Chess Championship at Athens on August 29. In 1987, when India's Viswanathan Anand was declared the youngest champion, he was 18. It is this record that Harikrishna has lowered. For Humpy, at Athens, it was her fourth world win. Hailing from Andhra Pradesh, both Harikrishna and Humpy will no longer play in age-group competitions but take on grown-up players.

First ever child Mayor

Eleven year old Jayeeta Mitra sat in the Kolkata Mayor's chair for a whole afternoon on August 25 to become the first ever child Mayor in India. She got this distinction after her essay on "How I can make Kolkata a dream city" was adjudged the best among 450 shortlisted entries received from 20 schools in the city. The contest was meant for under-16 children and was part of the city's 311th birthday celebrations. It was jointly sponsored by UNICEF and an organisation called Prayanam. "I'm distressed by the sad state of affairs of the city," said Mayor Jayeeta Mitra at a Press conference. "I'll improve the condition when I actually become Mayor", she added with an aplomb.





Jumping for an experiment

Nearly 1,000,000 school children in Britain jumped up and down, not for any joy but for a scientific experiment: to find out whether they would create an earthquake! They did not, but their exercise entered the record books as the world's largest scientific experiment. The British government was launching the International Science Year 2001 on September 7. Though no quake was recorded, every single seismograph in the

British Isles recorded the jump. The children assembled in their respective playgrounds and at 11 a.m. on the dot, they all began jumping up and down, only for a minute, simultaneously. Scientists expected at least a mild quake if a million children weighing on an average 50 kilos were to jump up and down a minimum 20 times. Some children feared the world might split into two; some others thought the earth would change its orbit, while a few others were certain they would land up in hospitals with sprained ankles! Thank god, nothing like that happened.

British title for Kerala boy

Brothers Arjun and Gaurishankar Vishnuvardhan of Trivandrum were given a wild card entry to the British Chess Federation Under-11 Championship at Scarborough in London early in August. Arjun won all the six rounds of the tournament and beat the reigning British champion to gain the title. Gaurishankar came second.



SAGA OF VISHNU

17. Krishna's role in the Kurukshetra war

*T*he Pandavas and Kauravas now got ready for the great war of Kurukshetra. Duryodhana secretly thought that Arjuna was a fool, for, who else would choose a lone individual against a huge army, no matter how skilled and capable that person might be? Krishna had given them the choice—himself on one side, and his Yadava army on the other side. Now Duryodhana had an entire army to fight on the Kaurava side.

King Dhritarashtra sent Sanjaya as

an envoy to the Pandavas with a peace proposal. The Pandavas, in turn, sent Krishna as their envoy to the Kauravas. Krishna told them that war was bad for both sides. Even if the Kauravas were determined not to part with half of their kingdom, in the interests of peace the Pandavas would be happy with Indraprastha and five villages around it.

But Duryodhana was adamant that not even a needlepoint of land would be given to the Pandavas. They would have to win back their kingdom by waging a war.

Krishna got up on hearing Duryodhana's arrogant words. "I shall be Arjuna's charioteer during the battle," he declared. "It will fly a flag with the picture of Hanuman on it. Arjuna with his Gandiva bow will cut through your ranks like a sharp scythe on a field of grass. At that time, even a thousand Karnas will not be able to save you. Not one of your stalwarts will survive the war. Believe me, at that time there will be none to listen to you at all."

Krishna's words roused





Duryodhana to great anger. “Hey, Krishna!” he thundered. “Have you come here as an envoy or have you come here to boast the Pandava’s strength and threaten us? I’ll imprison you and tie you up with strong ropes at once for your insolence. Let me see if those mighty Pandavas can free you and take you away.” Then he asked Duhshasana to bring strong metal chains.

Those who had accompanied Krishna now unsheathed their swords. But Krishna stopped them and said: “I’m an unarmed envoy. Is it right to imprison me? It’s my fault that I came here without finding out the situation in this place. Well, here I am. If you want, you can imprison me.” Some of the men in the Kaurava court wanted to tie up Krishna, but he assumed his awesome Universal form. Everyone present was dumbstruck and Duryodhana and his men ran away in fear.

The peace talks having failed, everyone prepared for a mighty war that would involve everyone in the land. The battleground of Kurukshetra was about to witness the kind of bloodshed and carnage that had not been witnessed before.

As the several kings and their allies came to the battlefield, one could hear the bells on the chariots, the beat of drums, and the clatter of horse hooves as the armies took their respective positions.

Sanjaya, Dhritarashtra’s nephew and companion, had the gift of far sight and was able to watch what was happening on the battlefield. Sanjaya described the battle while the blind Dhritarashtra, unsuccessful in preventing this awful war, and his wife Gandhari, who had bound her eyes in sympathy, sat and listened to him.

Sanjaya said: “ All is ready now. The Pandavas and the Kauravas face

each other. Clan upon clan, kith and kin, face each other in this battle.”

Then Dhritarashtra asked: “Tell me, Sanjaya of the farseeing eyes, what is the difference between the two sides? Who seems more powerful?”

Sanjaya answered thoughtfully: “The Pandavas and Kauravas seem evenly matched when you look at their arms and their armies but..”

“But what?” asked Dhritarashtra urgently.

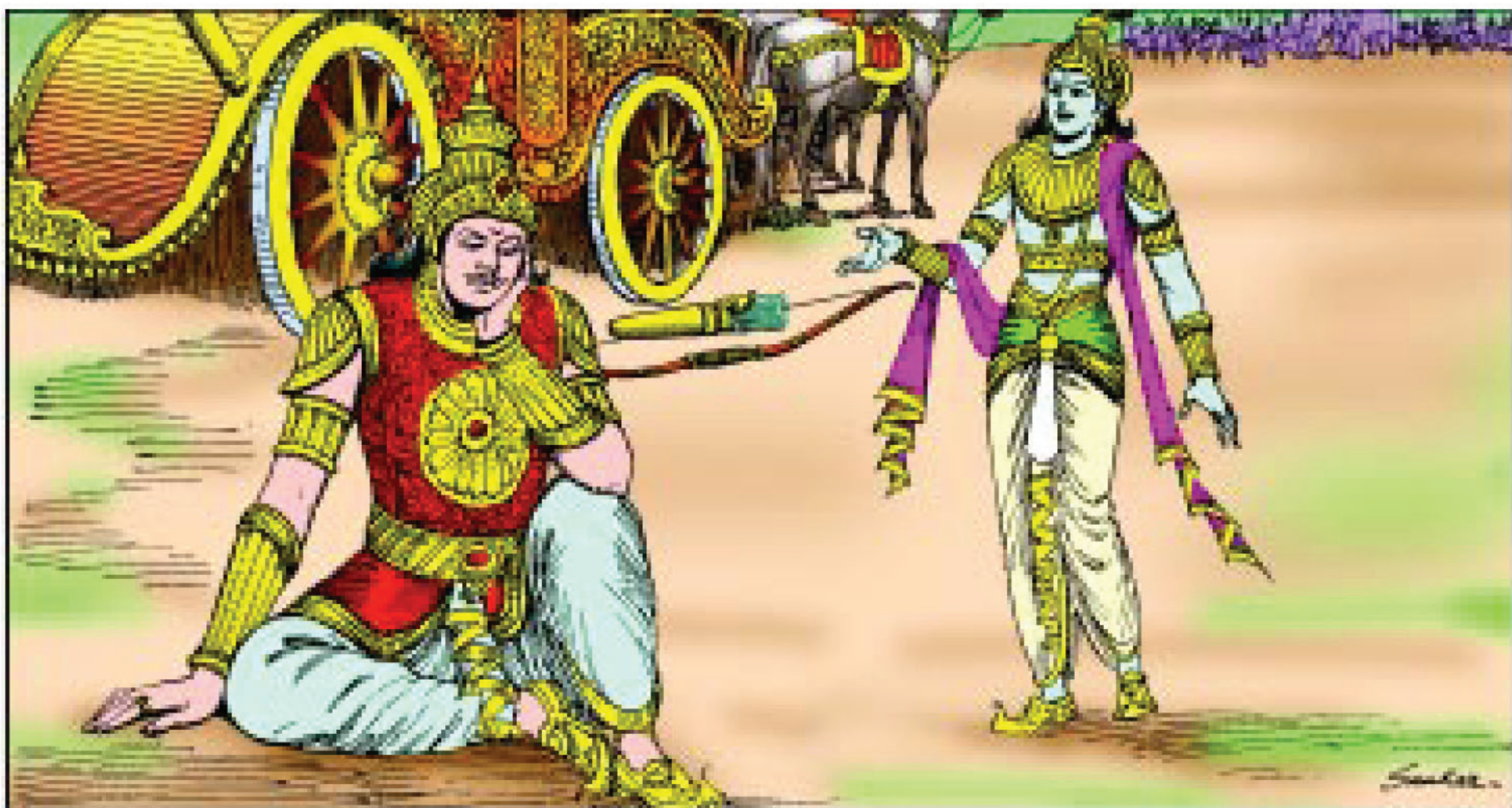
“Having got Krishna on their side, the Pandavas are more powerful,” said Sanjaya, and then went on to describe the battle itself.

The two sides stood facing each other. Krishna drove Arjuna’s chariot right to the centre of the space between the two sides and stopped. Arjuna ran his eyes over the sight of the Kaurava troops. Wherever he

looked he saw not any enemy but a cousin or an uncle or a well-loved teacher or a dear friend or a nephew who was almost like a son. Arjuna’s blood ran cold. ‘For the sake of a kingdom, should I smear my hands with the blood of these near and dear ones?’ he asked himself. ‘I do not want a kingdom born of blood, the blood of my own kinsmen!’

“I cannot fight this war,” he said as he turned to Krishna in despair. Arjuna fell against the back of his chariot and allowed his bow, the mighty Gandiva and his quiver to slide off his shoulders, as though drooped in sorrow and misery.

Then Krishna spoke: “Do not lose yourself in sorrow like this. It is not befitting a Kshatriya to lose heart at the sight of the enemy. Your duty is to do your dharma and not allow the



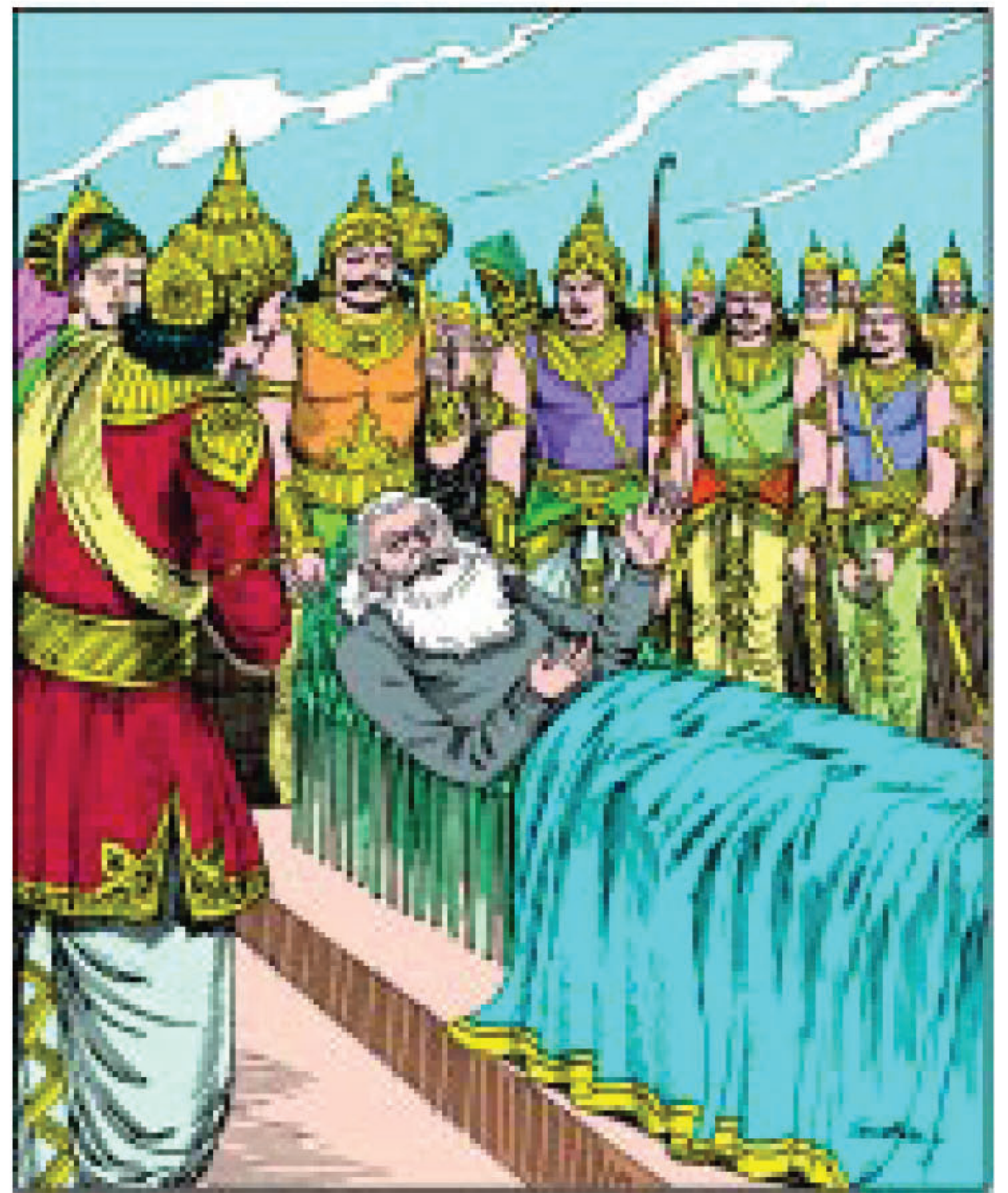
thought of the consequences to paralyse you.

“Whenever the burden of evil increases on the earth to harm the good and the righteous, then Narayana incarnates on the earth to destroy that evil. Consider me as that incarnation and take refuge in me. Put all your faith in me and do your duty. Pick up your Gandiva like a true Kshatriya and get ready for battle.”

Even after these inspiring words Arjuna hesitated a little and then Krishna manifested before him in his breathtaking Universal form. Arjuna was awe-struck as he saw the whole cosmos in a sort of swirling balance with creation, continuation, and destruction going on in endless eternity. The dancer and the dance seemed to merge into a dizzying whole. The act, the actor, and the action all seemed one. Time and eternity seemed part of that whole.

The amazing sight brought some peace to Arjuna’s mind, as he realised in this great movement of creation and destruction his was but an insignificant part. ‘I have no choice but to do as Shri Krishna guides,’ he told himself. He picked up the Gandiva with renewed energy and straightened up for battle. He blew hard on the conch, signalling the start of the war.

The two sides fell upon each other like fierce lions that had been starved



for days. What Krishna had predicted in the peace talks had come to pass. In spite of the many brave deeds and clever strategies, the Kauravas were not able to get the better of the Pandavas.

Many heroes from both sides lost their lives in the battle – Abhimanyu, Karna, and many others.

Bhishma was mortally wounded and lay on a bed of arrows waiting for the sun to turn northwards to give up his life. As he lay on his deathbed, he taught Yudhishtira all he knew about statecraft. After the war, Yudhishtira was crowned king and a horse sacrifice was organised to proclaim this. The Mahabharata war fought at great cost had rooted out evil from the world just as Vishnu had promised Bhu Devi. **(To conclude)**

There's always a better way

* Reader **Rajasekharan** of Salem writes: *During my conversation with friends, I mentioned 'co-brother', and one of them laughed. He remarked that the expression is Indian English. What is Indian English? Are there other words like that?*

Indian English simply means use of words, though giving out the required meaning, which is not the correct way to express the idea. The word co-brother is used for referring to one's wife's brother-in-law. This happens when two men are married to sisters. Compare "co-brother" with "my wife's brother-in-law". No ambiguity. Compare "I took a *headbath*" and "I washed my hair". Or "my *native place* is Kottayam" and "my home-town is Kottayam". "Cousin-brother", "cousin-sister" are examples of the Indian way of describing relationship. "Half pants" for "shorts" "overspeeding" for "speeding", "pre-pone" to mean an advancing of a date are words falling under the category of Indian English or not English as spoken by the natives of that language.

*Is there any difference between "pushover" and "push over", asks **Raj Narain** of Lucknow.* "The test was a pushover"—this means, the test was quite easy. "The one-dayer with South Africa will be a pushover for India". One can also refer to a person as a pushover, meaning he or she can be easily influenced. Now, look at this: "Mohan pushed Meena over a pile of sand." Don't push your friend over anything, he may get hurt!

*And this is by reader **Hemambika Datar** of Belgaum: I came across terms like couch potatoe and mouse potatoe. Are they the same?*

No. Couch potatoe is someone who spends all his leisure hours in front of a TV or sits huddled (need not be in a couch!) reading her favourite Mills & Boons for hours together. In mouse potatoe, the mouse is the device attached to the computer. A computer addict with his palm on the mouse, again for hours together, is a mouse potatoe! If the couch potatoe and the mouse potatoe do not come out to play with you, don't blame them; there is either a hair-raising teleserial on the TV or an interesting website on the internet.

This came from Tanmoy Mallick of Jeypore:

I have been an avid reader of *Chandamama* from my school days. I read to improve my vocabulary in English. The September issue was lacking in new words, and I was disappointed. I request you to publish more interesting stories with heavy vocabulary, so that I can improve my knowledge.

How about
“Towards better
English”? Doesn’t
the feature help you
with idioms,
phrases, and
expressions?

-Editor

Reader Murali from Chipurupalli, Vizianagaram district, Andhra Pradesh, writes:

I have been reading *Chandamama* for five years. I like the Hodja stories. “Hair by Hair” in the September issue was interesting. I did not find it in the Telugu issue. I like each and every story in *Chandamama*. I suggest that you print more stories of Tenali Rama. I wish a glorious future for *Chandamama*.

Prabak Jagpalkumar Sahu, of Bilaspur, Chattisgarh, writes:

I have been reading *Chandamama* (Hindi) since 1975. Apart from entertainment, your magazine provides useful points in our modern life. The new issues contain only few stories. Please give importance to Pauranik stories. In spite of all this, *Chandamama* gives a delight at heart.

**This came from
Trivikram of
Lingareddy Palli,
Andhra Pradesh:**

Kudos to the technology! The hues and shades given to the drawings are beautiful. For example, the picture on page 18 of October issue. Please confine caricature-like illustrations (page 46, 47) to comics. The drawings for Men of Wit can be more attractive. I am eagerly awaiting the Children’s Special.



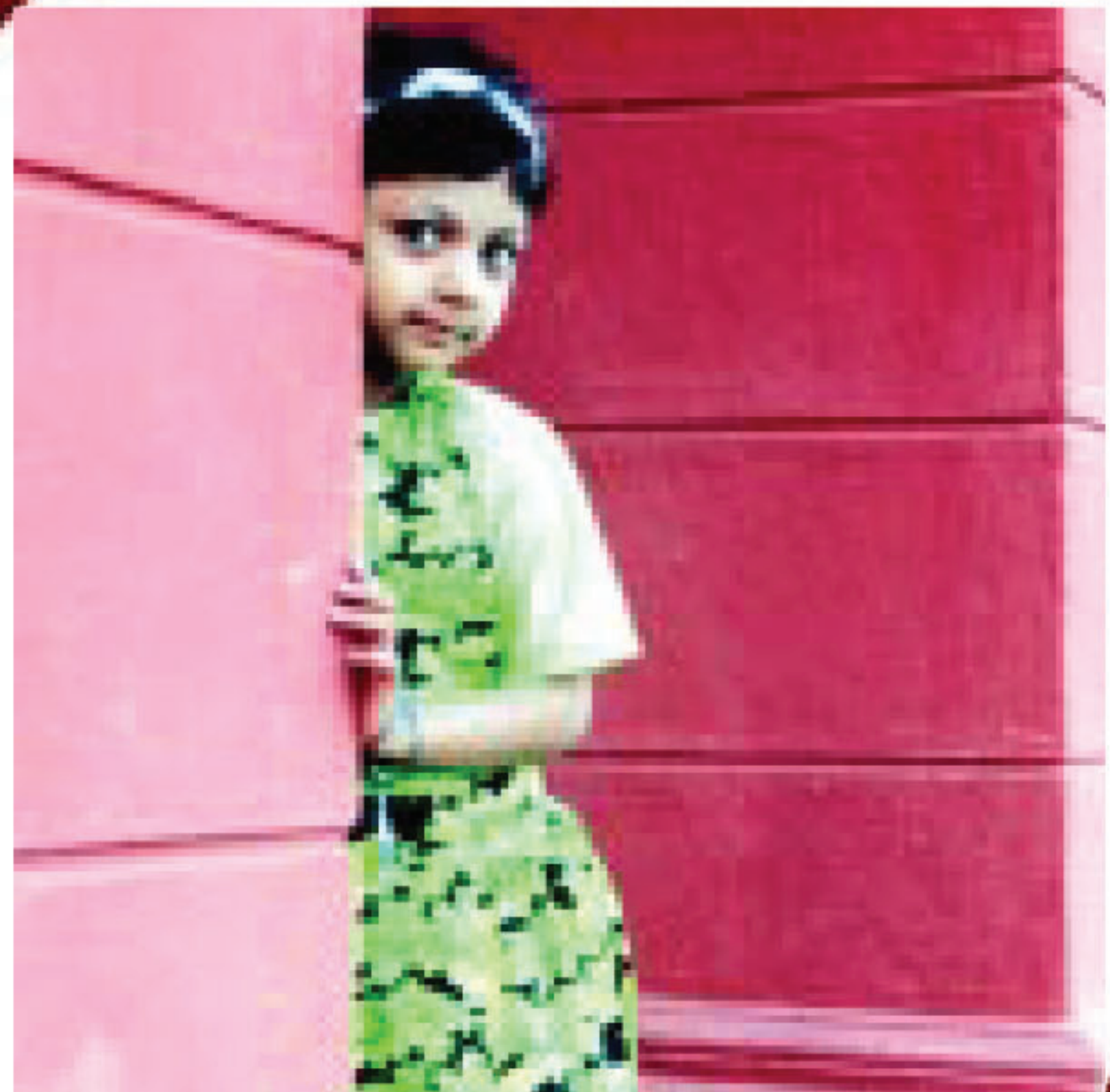
**Purva Jain of Nagpur
has this to say:**

I have read your magazine only once, but I feel as if I have read a hundred other magazines. *Chandamama* is magnificent. I narrated one of the stories in my class, and I got a prize.



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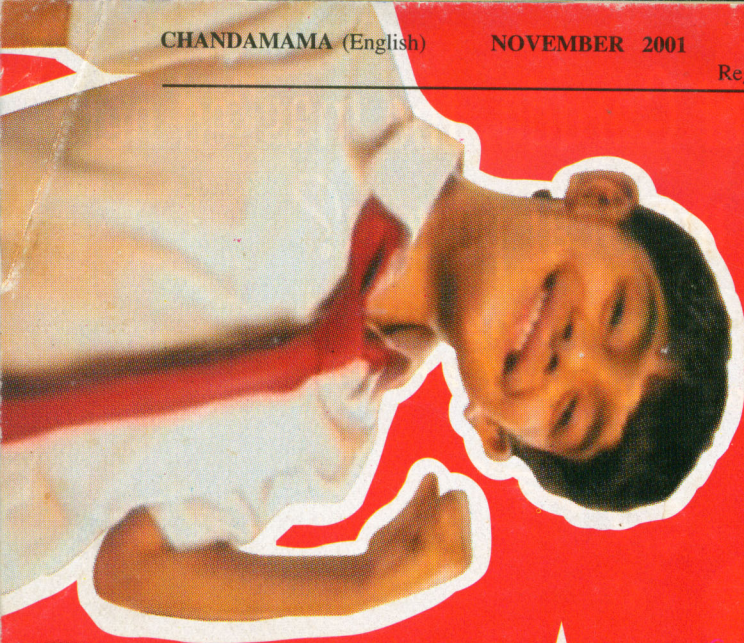
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